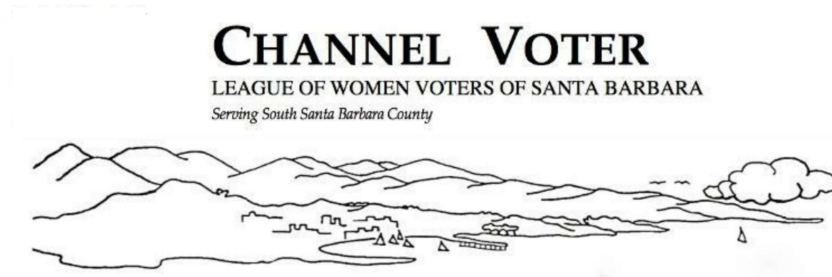


Date Sent February 14, 2024

From League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara

Subject Subject: How The League is Defending Democracy



**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

**February 14, 2024**



**Democracy in Peril**

**What the League of Women Voters is Doing to Save it**  
*A Special Issue on LWV's*

## 104th Birthday

### Working on Many Fronts

Many feel that our democracy is in peril. And with good reason. “The violent attempt to overturn the 2020 election results was a flagrant disregard of the core components of our democracy — the power of the vote and the peaceful transition of presidential power. This must not happen again.”

Those are the words of the League of Women Voters of the United States. But there is hope—because the League (LWV), along with others, is working on many fronts to defend democracy.

Feb. 14 marks the 104th birthday of the League. LWV was born out of the struggle for women's suffrage, and the fight for voting rights—for everyone--continues. The League engages in education, advocacy, litigation at all levels—and following in the footsteps of the suffragists--taking to the streets.

The League of Women Voters was on the frontlines of a months-long movement to address restrictive voting laws. There were hundreds of arrests in the summer of 2021. As part of a coalition of more than 50 partners, dozens of League leaders, staff and board members called for the Biden Administration to take immediate action.

LWV supported the impeachment of President Trump for the insurrection. Virginia Kase Solomón, then League CEO and one of those arrested at that protest, explained, “Our role as trusted voices around American democracy was a major part of our decision to call for the impeachment of Donald Trump following the January 6th insurrection. I’m proud the League took this unprecedented step in defense of democracy. That courageous action from LWVUS leadership — calling out a sitting president for obstructing justice — was not easy. We made that statement unapologetically on behalf of all American voters and what we require for our democracy.”

The work to defend our democracy is ongoing. LWV recently issued this statement: “Three years ago, our nation's capitol faced an unprecedented threat to our democracy that will be etched in the memory of our nation forever. As this presidential election cycle begins, and millions of Americans head to the polls to vote for the next president in primaries, there is more work to be done to defend our democracy.

“At the League of Women Voters, we envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate. The League remains committed to our mission of empowering voters, defending democracy, and ensuring free and fair elections for all.”

In 2020, more people voted than ever before. LWV applauded “the will and determination of the American public to participate in elections amid an ongoing pandemic. This unprecedented turnout is a testament to the determination of the American voters and the strength of our democratic system. It is also a testament to the tenacity and power of Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian, Muslim, LGBTQ+, and young voters who turned out in record numbers demanding their voices be heard. We are truly inspired...

“The League’s work in 2020 informed and protected millions of voters. The League was instrumental in the ongoing fight to preserve American democracy in a nonpartisan manner even in one of the most partisan and contentious elections in our nation’s history. One hundred years after our organization was founded, we remained committed to our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.”



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## Empowering Voters

In the 2022 mid-terms, millions of Americans voted in pivotal state and local elections across the country. The League of Women Voters, the country's oldest voting rights organization, reached over two million voters on VOTE411.org, the most ever for a non-federal election cycle.

Throughout the year, Leagues across the country hosted tens of thousands of voter registration drives, informative town hall meetings, candidate debates and forums, and educational workshops on important civic issues. These initiatives not only helped to raise awareness but also encouraged more individuals to exercise their right to vote. In 2023, the League also recruited over 2,000 people interested in supporting their communities as poll workers.

In 2023, the League of Women Voters provided essential information on an impressive 20,000 races and 46,000 candidates through its nonpartisan voter education website, VOTE411.org, empowering voters with all the information they need to make informed decisions.

"Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, and we are incredibly proud to serve the public as a trusted resource for voters, especially as voters face disinformation campaigns," said Jeanette Senecal, senior director of Mission Impact for the League of Women Voters of the United States. "The League worked diligently to engage communities and provide voters with the information they needed to decide who would best represent them. Reaching over two million voters through VOTE411.org is a testament to our dedication to civic engagement and voters' commitment to ensuring their voices were heard during these important state and local elections."

The League remains committed to fostering civic participation and will continue its efforts to reach even more voters in the future. Visit VOTE411.org to access the comprehensive voter information database and prepare for the upcoming elections in 2024.

In addition to fighting for voting rights, LWV carries out its promise of "Making Democracy Work" by taking action on dark money, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, reproductive rights, redistricting reform, and much more.

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## The ERA

This is the four-year anniversary of when the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was won...or should have been.

In January 2020, the ERA met all ratification requirements when Virginia became the 38th and final state needed to ratify the amendment. Yet today, the ERA still isn't included in the US Constitution. This January also marked the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the landmark US Supreme Court decision that established the constitutional right to abortion.

But it is the second Roe Day we've observed since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, stripping women and people who may become pregnant of a fundamental right they'd held for nearly 50 years. This is just one example of the devastating consequences of our equal rights not being protected.

This is why we need the ERA.

The Equal Rights Amendment will update the Constitution to protect equality under the law regardless of sex. The ERA would prevent the rollback of equal rights, provide a vital tool to the judicial branch to combat discrimination, and pave the way for additional legislative progress.

Despite the significant advances made in recent decades, women, among others, continue to face discrimination based on sex. This is clear in the ongoing fights against unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, limited access to comprehensive health care, and more. We cannot take a single liberty for granted, and we will not stop fighting until everyone's equal rights are protected regardless of their sex or gender.

The League has been gearing up to continue our fight in 2024 to publish the ERA, but we can't do it without your help. Take one minute today to urge your members of Congress to assert that the ERA is part of the Constitution!

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## Dark Money

Jan. 21, 2024 marked 14 years since the Citizens United ruling. It's been nearly three years since the Dobbs v. Jackson ruling stripped women of the right to choose, which had been protected for nearly 50 years by Roe v. Wade. These anniversaries remind us that voters deserve to know who is funding their candidates.

"Big money in politics prevents progress on the issues that matter most, including reproductive justice, gun violence prevention, health care, and climate change. We must end Citizens United to give power back to the people. It's time for Congress to pass the DISCLOSE Act and root out dark money in politics!"

The League urges people to contact their representatives and tell them now is the time to root out dark money that has an increasing influence on issue campaigns and elections.

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## Taking the Fight to Court

The League is at the forefront of the most important federal and state cases across the United States. The LWV 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;

- The elimination of voting locations in underserved communities;
- Unjust voter purges; and
- Attempts to limit access to early and mail-in voting.
- Advocating to End Voter Suppression

Leagues across the country take the fight to the courts through litigation when needed – and win. A searchable database, the LWV Legal Center, provides updates on cases. [Click here.](#)

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## **The Future Inspired by the Past**

In a blog that can be read in full [here](#), Virginia Kase Solomón commented, “we are not the League of yester-year, but the League of tomorrow.”

Before 2022, the League had never participated in the Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee. But this time LWV took part this annual commemoration of the historic 50-mile Civil Rights March of 1965.

“The League’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is a continued journey,” Solomón wrote.

In 2021, LWV invested \$5 million in “Women Power Democracy,” a series of initiatives to help realize “A stronger, more representative democracy.”

A month before the 2018 mid-terms, Solomón was arrested protesting Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. “Many people within the League were not pleased with my arrest, but as Harvard Professor Laurel Thatcher Ulrich said, ‘Well-behaved women seldom make history.’ For inspiration, I looked to the suffrage leaders arrested at the White House one hundred years ago fighting for women’s voting rights — some of whom went on to found the League. My arrest was a turning point for our modern League but a continuation of the action taken so many years ago. It began a new chapter of organizing and permitting people to ‘behave badly’ for justice and democracy.”

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## A Love Letter?

You may think this reads like a love letter to the League of Women Voters of the United States. Well, you would be right. (It is Valentine's Day, after all). The work that is being done across the country inspires state and local League members and makes them want to continue doing their own work.

To celebrate the US League's 104th birthday, our local League will be recognizing those who are also carrying out our mission of "defending democracy." Inspired by all that LWV does at all levels to defend democracy, the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara is asking members and friends to nominate "Democracy Champions" in our community.

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## Calling All “Democracy Champions”

Be a voice for democracy! Help us push back against efforts to undermine our democratic system of government, which is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

### Leading by example

Are YOU a Democracy Champion? Do you know a person, group, or organization in your community that is dedicated to advocating, promoting, supporting, or otherwise defending democracy?

Tell us in your own words --500 or fewer please--about a person (yourself, your partner, friend, colleague, mentor, neighbor, instructor, etc.); a project; event; or program here on the South Coast that exemplifies democracy in action. If appropriate, tell us how we can individually help cheer them on in their efforts.

### Inspire us

We are hoping to honor local champions monthly in the Channel Voter. To share a story, please email your submittal to [ChannelVoter@lwvsantabarbara.org](mailto:ChannelVoter@lwvsantabarbara.org). All entries will be reviewed by our Communications Committee for relevance and possible editing for space and clarity before being published in the Channel Voter.



## Donate Today

If you have paid your annual dues to belong to the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara, you are also a member of the League of Women Voters of California and the League of Women Voters of the United States. Your membership supports the League's hard work across the state and the nation -- but did you know that only \$20 of your dues remain with your local League?

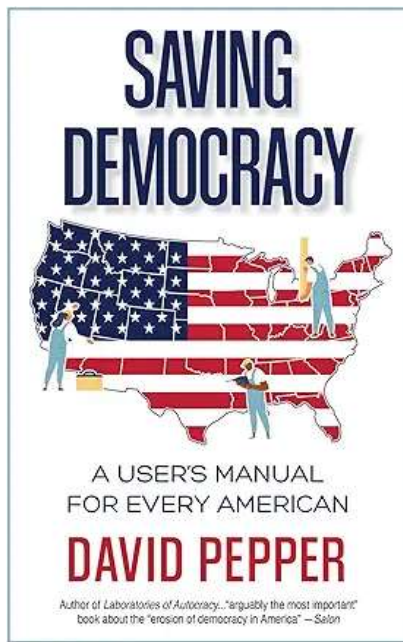
Democracy will always need to be defended. For 85 years the all-volunteer LWVSB has done education and advocacy on important community issues—like housing, the environment and criminal justice. Our voter service teams register and inform voters. With your help, we can continue “making democracy work” right here at home.

All dues and donations to the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara are tax-deductible.

[Donate here.](#)

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## More Information

*Saving Democracy: A User's Manual for Every American* by David Pepper

*Letters from an American*, Heather Cox Richardson [here](#).

*Ranked Choice Voting Explained – with Cute Pets*, Robert Reich. [Click here](#).

Sign up for Action Alerts:

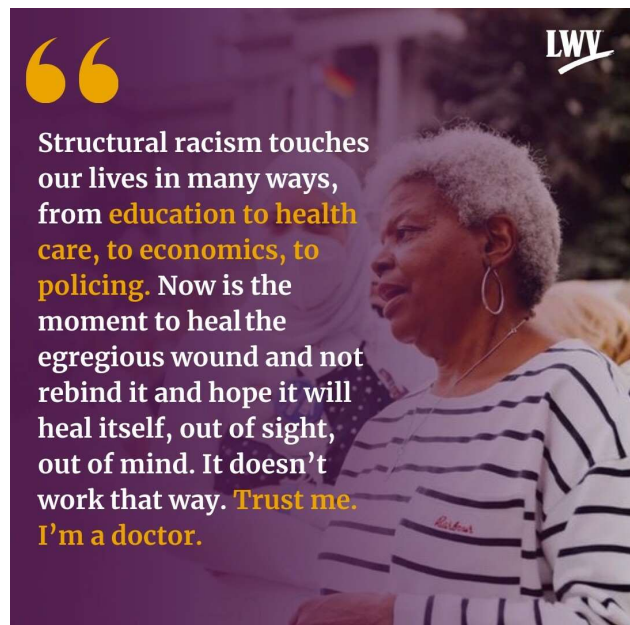
League of Women Voters of the United States: [here](#)

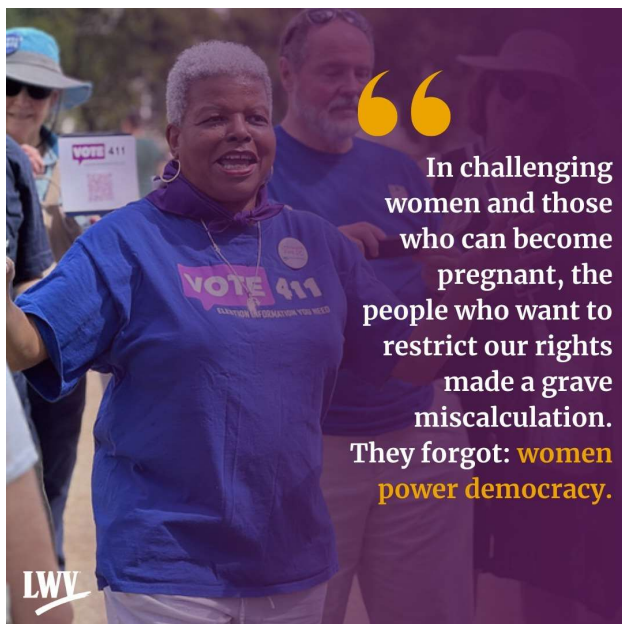
League of Women Voters of California: [here](#)

[Visit](#) the LWVSB website

We join the US League in mourning the Jan. 28 death of Board President Dr. Deborah Turner, and conclude with her inspiring message.

*This special issue of the Channel Voter was written  
By Vicki Allen and Beth Pitton-August*



[Donate](#)[Join](#)[Done](#)