



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

October 2015

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Member Consensus Discussion on AMENDING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Saturday • October 24, 2015 • 10 am – noon

Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church
728 W Fremont Ave •Coleman Room

All League Members Welcome!
RSVP appreciated, but not required:
league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org

Download the [Consensus Questions for this discussion.](#)

LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

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The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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This meeting is part of a national League study on Constitutional Amendment. Members will discuss a set of questions developed by the national study committee to elucidate areas of agreement among League members. This discussion will not address amendments on any particular issue. Instead, these questions cover general considerations for evaluating amendments, possible constraints on a constitutional convention, and how to balance policy objectives of an amendment with process considerations. See page 3 for some background on amending the constitution.

To prepare for this discussion, it is helpful to read the [consensus questions](#) in advance. But the most important thing is to come to the meeting ready to speak your mind and listen to others as we explore these questions together to illuminate the consensus among our members.

By participating in this discussion, you will be contributing to a grassroots process central to the League and its reputation for quality work on public policy.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AND CONSENSUS!
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

This fall our League is undertaking two national League studies that were adopted together in 2014 under the umbrella of “Structures of Democracy.” This month we are conducting member consensus on the new League study of Constitutional Amendment: see pages 1 and 3 for meeting details and background. Next month we’ll be doing a presentation on “Money in Politics” at the Sunnyvale Library, as background for member consensus in January on an update study of our campaign finance position. See the calendar on page 8 for dates, times, and locations.

Why does the League do studies like this? We want our public policy positions to be based upon thorough study, consideration of all sides to an issue, and member consensus. That thoughtful approach sets the League apart and contributes to our respected reputation.

What is your role? League members who participate in consensus discussions are helping to ensure that broadly based input goes into the development of the League position. It also helps to elevate the level of member understanding of League positions.

What is consensus? Through group discussion of the pros and cons of each question, the discussion leaders will be looking for a “sense of the group” in determining whether there is consensus.

What happens after the consensus meeting? Our League’s board will approve a report of the status of our members’ consensus on each question, along with any necessary elaboration. That consensus report will then be transmitted to the LWVUS for evaluation along with reports from Leagues throughout the country. A new position is then crafted, based upon the study committee’s work and member consensus reports.

Whether you’re a member who always comes to consensus meetings or has never come to one, I hope you will consider joining us on the morning of Saturday, October 24th.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AND CONSENSUS!

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Roberta

Board Briefs

At its September meeting your board:

- Learned that there has been a good response to the membership renewal drive.
- Changed the date of its November board meeting to November 16.
- Approved the plans for a Consensus meeting on the Constitutional Amendment study for October 24 and a public forum on Money In Politics on November 9.
- Discussed the possibility of a consensus meeting on Higher Ed in California in the spring.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

Participate in the Consensus meeting on the Constitutional Amendment Study, October 24 (see p. 1 and 3 for details).

Attend the Juvenile Justice Forum on October 28 (see p. 5).

IN MEMORIUM

We are sad to report the death of long-time member and community activist, Pat Jackson. Our condolences go to her husband Jim and family.

AMENDING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Delegates from twelve of the thirteen states met in 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation. Instead, they ended up drafting a totally new document, the U.S. Constitution. Although hotly debated at the time, the new Constitution was unanimously ratified by all thirteen states.

The Constitution articulates how it may be amended in Article V (see box). Amendments may be proposed in two ways: (1) By a two-thirds vote in each chamber, Congress may propose constitutional amendments. (2) The legislatures of two-thirds of the states (34 at present) may ask Congress to call a national convention for the purpose of proposing amendments. Amendments proposed by either method go into effect only after ratification by three-fourths of the states (38 at present).

Congress has passed 33 amendment proposals, including 27 which were ratified by a sufficient number of states to be added to the Constitution. Ratification votes occurred in state legislatures for all but one amendment, which was approved by state ratification conventions. A constitutional convention for proposing amendments has never been successfully invoked.

In recent years there has been increased interest in constitutional amendments. Proposals on a balanced budget and flag desecration have achieved two-thirds support in the House but not the Senate. Other recent amendment proposals have not yet gotten that far, on



U.S. Constitution, Article V

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress; . . .

subjects including campaign finance, religious freedom, procedures for imposing new taxes, victims' rights, redefining U.S. citizenship, and easing requirements for future amendments.

NEW LEAGUE STUDY: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Despite being born out of a successful campaign to change the Constitution to give women the right to vote, the League of Women Voters has no position on federal constitutional amendment. This fall, Leagues nationwide are engaging in consensus discussions to probe our shared values and beliefs regarding the circumstances that might allow or compel the League to endorse a constitutional amendment or a constitutional convention.

In assessing a proposed constitutional amendment, the League would first ask whether it has policy positions which support the amendment. But, even if the answer is an unqualified "yes," we would need to examine other factors before deciding whether to support the amendment.

The national League study committee has prepared a set of questions to frame the discussion of those other factors. The questions for member consensus discussions fall into three areas: (1) evaluating amendment proposals, (2) requirements or restrictions on a constitutional convention, and (3) balancing the policy content of a proposed amendment and process considerations.

Our local League will gather to discuss these questions and determine the consensus among our members on Saturday, October 24. (See page 1 for details.) We recommend that members download the questions and read through them prior to the meeting:

[Consensus Questions on Constitutional Amendment.](#)

THE HILLS AT VALLCO



The Vallco shopping mall is in for a change. Sand Hill Property Co. has submitted to the city its plan to replace the current mall. According to the developers their vision is to, “turn a outdated, failed, retail-only shopping mall into a vibrant, sustainable, walkable and safe neighborhood with

a mix of retail, dining, entertainment, sports, employment, housing, open space, and community uses.

The most striking element of the new plan is the 30 acre park on the large green roof. The park is designed to provide trails, vineyards, an amphitheater, orchards and organic gardens.

There are many things the city needs to approve: a specific plan for the project, a development agreement, a conditional use permit, and other permits, maps, etc. before construction can begin. The planning commission and city council will hold public hearings on the plan before any construction is started.

For further information see:

[Cupertino Courier August 28](#)

and

[Cupertino Courier September 18](#)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SUNNYVALE

Civic Center Community Workshop – The event of the month for those interested in the future of Sunnyvale’s Civic Center is on Saturday, October 3. This third community workshop will explore three land use scenarios for modernization of the city’s administrative offices, public safety facilities, and library. Participants will work in groups to sketch out plans for the Civic Center site under three scenarios, each one having some unique constraints. This exercise is intended to solicit citizen input on a range of possibilities and to help build shared understanding of the needs, challenges, and opportunities for modernization of the Civic Center. We encourage League members and interested residents to make time to participate in this workshop.

League’s Sunnyvale Group – At its first meeting in September, the group decided to focus initially on these topics: the Civic Center, the El Camino Real Corridor, Butchers Corner, and the November 2016 ballot measure on city property. We will continue to follow other development news in Sunnyvale, but group members will expend most of their effort on learning about priority topics. The group sees much need for improved understanding of development issues and has a strong desire to make a difference in community education. During the next months, the group will be sharing ideas, formulating plans, and learning about development in Sunnyvale. League member meetings on development topics are likely to start by next spring. In the meantime, if you have ideas for the group or would like to commit your energy and talents to this endeavor, please write to SunnyvaleGroup@cs.ca.lwvnet.org.

Upcoming Sunnyvale Meetings

Agendas, meeting packets, audio/video: meetings.inSunnyvale.com

Location: City Hall Council chambers, unless otherwise noted.

TV channel 15: live broadcast of many meetings.

Civic Center Modernization Project

CivicCenter.inSunnyvale.com

- 9/29 • 7 pm City Council – public hearing & decisions
Rescheduled from 9/22. *See agenda for details.
- 10/3 • 9 am **Community Workshop** – land use scenarios
Plans sketched out under 3 sets of constraints.
Senior Center • 550 E Remington Dr
Preparation: [Workshop Materials](#)

* Council agendas change often, so check at the meetings link.

Butchers Corner – The annexation resolution is currently on the 10/13 City Council agenda. There will be a public hearing followed by Council action. Background information: ButchersCorner.inSunnyvale.com.

Stay informed and make your voice heard:

- [Give input via City surveys on current topics](#)
- [Subscribe to email notices on City meetings](#)

FORUM ON PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

More than 100 League members and guests gathered in the Hearthside Lounge at Foothill College to learn about issues related to Public Higher Education in California.



Keynote Speaker, Dr. Carol Christ, director of the University of California at Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education began by reviewing the history of Higher Education in the United States starting with private colleges and then public institutions created with the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act, the impact of the GI Bill after World War II, and the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education that set up a coherent system for postsecondary education and has become an international model for higher education.

Christ said the system is under financial stress with fewer families able to pay the full cost of education but we can't have a system that tries to minimize tax burden. We need to increase capacity through creative partnerships, effective use of online technology, increase in revenue.

Wade Ellis, retired from West Valley College after thirty years of teaching mathematics, served as the moderator for the panel discussion. Panelists represented various perspectives of the education community. Ellis posed questions to the panel about equity, preparedness, and completion.

Dr. Patricia Lopez, an Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership at San Jose State University, whose focus includes public and higher education policy and Latino education, noted that there is a growing population of minority students in higher education

and research shows that access to higher education affects political participation. The Latino population votes at the same rate as the majority population based on education level not income level. She also said that not all community colleges are the same and making something free does not guarantee completion.

Chris Funk, Superintendent of East Side High School District, one of the largest high school districts in the state, spoke about high school preparedness for college. He said, "more kids are eligible for Higher Ed but there is a higher percent taking remedial Math and English in college." He feels that the traditional system of the 55 minute class structure of the high school day does not prepare students for an unconstructed college experience. He proposes having students in their junior and senior years at high school take concurrent courses at a community college and when they graduate high school they will have completed one year of college.

Laura Casas, a Foothill-DeAnza Community College Trustee, addressed how completion and transfer rates are affected by state funding. When the state capped community college funding, the schools had to drop classes. She said there are bills that have passed or are waiting the Governor's signature that will affect transfer requirements.

Loo Loo Amante, San Jose State University student and past Director of External Affairs on the Associated Student's Board, spoke about challenges facing students in higher education.



STUDY OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA

Purpose and Scope

Almost daily, there are media reports about the need for reform in California public higher education in terms of access, adequate funding, and affordability. Although the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) has positions on education covering issues in pre K-12 education and the California Community Colleges (CCC), it does not have a position on public higher education in California inclusive of the CCCs, the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) systems. This lack of an inclusive position prevents LWVC from commenting on or advocating for or against proposed policies and legislation affecting higher education. This study was proposed and approved to remedy this situation and to provide LWVC with a comprehensive and inclusive position on public higher education in California.

According to the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education, open access to higher education is provided to all who can benefit from instruction.

The scope of the study, therefore, has been refined to examining access to quality public higher education in California including funding, affordability, preparedness, equity, and opportunities and barriers to student success. Understanding these issues and their importance for ensuring access to public higher education is essential for both the membership of LWVC and all residents of California.

LWV SANTA CLARA COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE PUBLIC FORUM

Wednesday October 28, 2015

11 AM - 12:45 PM

Mountain View City Hall Council Chambers



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

THE HON. PATRICK
TONDREAU

Supervising Judge, Juvenile
Division, Santa Clara County

TOPIC: How the County Juvenile Justice System addresses the needs and challenges of the youth and families within its system and for youth in the county.

Headed by Keynote Speaker Judge Patrick Tondreau, the speakers will discuss collaborative, cooperative steps to meet the challenge of our youth including youth trafficking, particularly at large public events.



ELISA CARIAS

Supervising Probation
Officer Juvenile Division

**Public is invited. Event is free.
Parking underground City Hall.**



CHRIS ARRIOLA

Supervising Deputy District
Attorney

This forum will be taped by KMTV for broadcasting on local cable news.

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

League members, Bena Chang, Susan Hough, Marieann Shovlin and Carol Weiss, participated in National Voter Registration Day by registering voters at the Sunnyvale Library.

We registered half a dozen or so new voters as well as doing some voter education brainstorming before handing off to a crew from the Registrar of Voters' office for the rest of the day.

The library was very hospitable as always and they'll be our hosts for Money in Politics Forum on October 28 (see p. 8).



Marieann Shovlin and Carol Weiss register voters at Sunnyvale Library

LWVUS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RETIRES

The world has changed since Nancy Tate came to work for the League as executive director on October 2, 2000. Within a matter of weeks, a presidential election that had been largely uneventful became anything but. For the League, rooted in the fight to get the vote for women and with the goal of empowering citizens to shape a better national community, Election 2000 was a major call to action. Not only did that election point up the inadequacies of our election system, even more importantly, it demonstrated that every single vote does count.

As we celebrate Nancy's retirement, after fifteen years with the League and wish her well in the future, we also thank her for her tireless efforts to focus the resources of the organization on Making Democracy Work® for every eligible voter. During Nancy's tenure the world has changed in so many ways. There have been tremendous expansions of the ways in which people interact with each other and with their government. Innovations in digital communication has created a challenge for our democracy as well as an unprecedented opportunity for the League in its work to educate and inform voters.

Since 2000, the League has been involved with the Help America Vote Act, McCain-Feingold, the

Affordable Care Act and countless efforts to protect the vote and reform our elections at the state level. Thanks to Nancy's creative leadership, the LWVUS has created new opportunities for voters to get the election information they need. High School Voter Registration, and New Citizens programs have improved and expanded the capacity and supported the work of League grassroots in the never-ending fight to ensure that every eligible voter has free and fair access to the polls. She has also found ways for the League to work for a fair and independent judiciary, civil liberties and open government. The League has focused on the impact of redistricting and money on our democracy as well.

As a direct result of Nancy's deep understanding of its culture, members and mission, the League has met the challenges that have arisen over the past 15 years both within and without the organization. The Membership and Leadership Development program was launched, the first virtual Council meeting took place and the League survived the financial meltdown in 2008 with its finances and activities intact.

We all join President Elisabeth MacNamera in thanking Nancy for her outstanding commitment and service to the League.

Join the League of Women Voters

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to LWVCS to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

___ \$60 Individual member

Name(s): _____

___ \$90 Two members in a household

Address: _____

___ \$30 Student

City: _____ State: ___ ZIP: _____

___ Contribution \$ _____

Phone(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Membership checks are made out to "LWVCS" and are not tax-deductible. Donations to "LWVCS" are also non-deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to "LWVC Education Fund."

CALENDAR

October

- Sat 3 9 am- 12 noon **Civic Center: Community Workshop #3**
Sunnyvale Senior Center
550 E Remington Dr, Sunnyvale 94086
Preparation: [WorkshopMaterials](#)
- Mon 12 7:30 pm **Board Meeting**
Burnett's
729 Stendhal Lane, Cupertino 95014
- Sat 24 10 am-noon **Member Discussion: Constitutional Amendment**
Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church
728 W Fremont Ave • Coleman Room
Preparation: [Discussion Questions](#)
- Wed 28 11 am - 12:45 **LWV Santa Clara County - Juvenile Justice Forum**
Mountain View City Council Chambers
500 Castro Street, Mountain View 94041

November

- Mon 9 7 pm **Money in Politics**
Sunnyvale Public Library
665 W Olive Ave • Program Room
Sunnyvale 94086

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The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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