



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

VOTER



FREMONT, NEWARK & UNION CITY

December 2016



Questions to Consider When Examining the Subject of Election of the President

- Is it time for direct election of the President?
- Has the electoral college system outlived its usefulness?
- Should election Day be a national holiday?
- Should it be held on a weekend?
- Should there be uniform requirements to register to vote?
- Should there be a time limit for the entire election process?

If the electoral college system remains:

- Should all states use the same method for choosing electors?
- Should electors be chosen proportionally according to the popular vote?
- What method is fairest to all states, large and small?
- Should one person/one vote be the ultimate rule?



Program Planning Souper Dinner Monday, January 23rd 6:00 PM League Office 3375 Country Drive Fremont

In our January meeting we will do our annual Program Planning. This year it will focus on our recommendations to LWVC. The Action Group met and recommends that we send a strong message to LWVC to support examination and action on election of the President.

In this VOTER you will find some background material on this issue. The Program Planning meeting will also feature one of our favorite ways of gathering members together - a SOUPER dinner!!! Please plan on joining us.

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



The 2016 elections are over and the results are in! Whether the candidate(s) of your choice won or lost, we hope you exercised your right to vote. More importantly, now is the time to hold those elected officials accountable to “we the people”. Other than voting them out of office in the next election, we can still continue to keep them accountable and have a say in our government via the following actions:

1. Stay in touch with the office of your elected officials and find out what laws are in the pipeline. At the local level, you can visit your city’s website and find out what’s going to be on the agenda and attend City Council meetings.
2. Apply for a board/commission position in an area of interest.
3. Attend community public information meetings, especially those sponsored by “good governance” organizations such as the League of Women Voters.
4. Engage with your fellow community members and find ways to discuss issues pertinent to you and to our community.
5. Be prepared to really listen to opposing points of view. You may never agree but at last you’ve heard another side to an issue. Hopefully, all sides will take this step.

The last action may be especially key in addressing the myriad of issues in a highly charged, partisan, politically divisive environment.

This election season was challenging and there was a lot of work to do; the League is very fortunate to have so many grassroots volunteers who spent countless hours helping to register voters, hold candidate and other public forums and for getting out the vote! We offer our most sincere thanks to the volunteers and members, because of whom, LWVFNUC is able to fulfill its mission to engage community and advocate for informed participation.

We wish you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year!

Syeda & Pauline

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Election Outreach

Our League shines during an election year and this year is no exception. Our outreach in person, through the mail and online was amazing – touching literally thousands of voters. On the personal level we sponsored 8 candidate forums in Fremont and Union City attended by over 300 people, 1 Regional and 8 State Pro/Con meetings attended by just over 300 voters. Volunteers passed out over 250 Voter Registration Forms on September 27th, National Voter Registration Day at the Fremont and Union City BART stations. We also worked with the Alameda County library to sponsor a meeting with Phillip Ung of the Fair Political Practices Commission who showed us how to “follow the money” on their Transparency Portal on their website www.fppc.ca.gov.

The Voter Information Booklet was mailed to almost 53,000 households in Fremont and Union City. Our Election Resource Center has become a go to place to find election information. And our YouTube videos to date have already had over 1500 views! The League Facebook and Twitter accounts continue to add followers. In addition to all this direct outreach our volunteers helped populate Voter’s Edge, contacting 41 local candidates to ensure they had their information on Voter’s Edge, an online

Voter’s Guide. As our by-line states “Democracy is not a spectator sport” and in our League we put this into practice.

We couldn’t make this happen without our many volunteers so we’ll attempt to thank each of you personally. Over 25% of our members volunteered during this election cycle. I apologize for any omissions and please contact me via email at samneeman@comcast.net so I can add you to our very large list of active volunteers.

THANK YOU Sets Amann, Kathy Bray, Kay Emanuele, David Fishbaugh, Carolyn Hedgecock, Pat Heer, Jean Holmes, Syeda Inamdar, Miriam Keller, Cathie Kelly, Joanne Landers, Marge Leonard (AAUW), Daniela Leyva, Evelyn LaTorre, Sophia Liu, Rita Manning, Mary Miller, Christina Monkman, Robert Monkman, Madeleine Monkman, Gus Morrison, Merna Morse, Joyce Mueller, Anu Natarajan, Sam Neeman, Shamsa Rafay, Andrea Schacter, Mary Schlab (COR) and friends, Marilyn Singer, John Smith, Sybil Smith, Alex Starr, Peter Starr, Kathy Steel –Sabo, Pauline Weaver and Judy Zlatnik.

Sam Neeman

Letter from Madeline Kronenberg LWV Bay Area - President

Dear Bay Area League Members,

I am writing this note to you first of all to thank you for all your hard work this election season. You are all much appreciated and clearly there is still much work to be done.

Moving forward, this January the Bay Area League will host our annual Bay Area League Day. This year our topic will be **Housing**. The details are as follows:

**Date: Saturday, January 28, 2017
(8:30 am - 3:00 pm)**

Topic: "FOCUS ON HOUSING"

Keynote Speaker: Tony Thurmond,
Assemblymember, District 15
Four Panel discussions on the current housing
situation in the Bay Area:

PANEL ONE: Measuring the Affordability Gap & Its Impact

PANEL TWO: The Relationship Between Housing Production & Affordability, & Displacement in the San Francisco Bay Area

PANEL THREE: State, Regional & Local Roles in Addressing Affordability

PANEL FOUR: The Agenda Moving Forward

Location:
Camden Community Center

Tickets:

Pre-registration: \$35. includes lunch

Pre-registration: \$20 without lunch

Day of the Event: \$40 with lunch

Day of the Event: \$25 without lunch

Please Note: PayPal options will be available in December.

You do not need a PayPal account to process your credit card

This promises to be a very informative day discussing one of the Bay Area's hottest topics. Please share this information with your members and plan to attend.

In addition, the Bay Area Board has learned that we need to conduct a special meeting to address a technical issue we overlooked at our Council meeting last May to conclude the merger of the Ed Fund and our League. This will be a short - one-item - agenda with a vote on this technical language that would allow us to go forward with the merger. We will need to have a quorum of our leagues present for the meeting to be valid.

Therefore, please confirm if you - or someone you can officially designate - plan to attend League Day on January 28, 2017. The special meeting will be held briefly at the lunch hour. If we are unable to conduct the special meeting at League Day, we will have to call a Special Meeting later in the year to finalize the merger.

Finally, I am attaching a list of the Regional Agencies that the Bay Area League monitors. As you can see, several of the agencies have no monitor at all. So, I am also requesting that you share this information with your members to see if anyone is interested in attending (in person or on line) these meetings and reporting back to us with a short report on the actions these agencies are taking. The reports can be very brief - simply reporting out on meeting outcomes. We know many of your leagues may already have members who are tracking these agencies and we would appreciate their insights (we would appreciate having more than one monitor assigned to each agency).

Again, as we move forward into our Thanksgiving holiday - thank you again for all you've done this year and I look forward to seeing you all in January.

Warmest wishes,

Madeline

Madeline Kronenberg
LWV Bay Area - President
510-334-9646

Program Planning Meeting Background Material

An edited message from Helen Hutchison, President of LWV California

Welcome to the program planning process for 2017-2019!

Program Planning. In the League, this is the process by which we help decide where and how we will focus our resources – member time, money, reputation – over the coming two years. Information for all resources for Program Planning can be found at archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/progplan/. This site provides all you need to lead a successful process in your local League and ensure that your members are heard in the process.

Whether you have lots of experience or are a newcomer, the kit has important information for your meeting.

Use as much or as little as you need!

We are a grassroots organization. Program planning is one of the ways for all of us to participate in a meaningful way. We all have the opportunity and the responsibility to participate in program planning – to make our voices heard. What do we want prioritized in California?

Feeling overwhelmed? There's help available!

- Check out the Program Planning Kit at archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/progplan/
- Join us on the LWVC Program Planning listserv to share your ideas and get questions answered. Send an email to lwvc-program-planning-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- Register for our webinar at attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1642753214244584195 on Thursday, December 15 at 7 p.m. to hear all about program planning and how to guide your League's participation.

A strong program planning process leads directly to the LWVC Convention 2017 (June 2-4, 2017, in Sacramento), at lwvc.wordpress.com/ where we will set priorities from both

a policy and a budgetary standpoint. LWVC board members carefully consider the input from League members as they formulate the recommended program.

Responses are due by Friday, February 24, 2017. Your hands-on work will make a big impact in the League and in California.

With gratitude,

Helen L. Hutchison
President, LWVC

Joanne Leavitt
Vice President for Advocacy and Program, LWVC

The League's History

A League study of the presidential electoral process culminated in a 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote as essential to representative government. The League testified and lobbied for legislation to amend the Constitution to replace the Electoral College with direct election of the President, including provisions for a national runoff election in the event no candidates (President or Vice-President) received 40 percent of the vote. The measure, which passed the House and nearly passed the Senate in 1971, has been revived in each Congress without success. In 1997, the LWVUS again called for abolition of the Electoral College and for direct election of the President and Vice-President in testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution.

The League has supported national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections to ensure equity for voters from all states and to facilitate the electoral process.

In February 2001, a memo was sent to the state and

local Leagues outlining the League's position on the Electoral College under the LWVUS position on Selection of the President.

The League believes strongly that the Electoral College should be abolished and not merely "reformed." One "reform" which the League specifically rejects is the voting by electors based on proportional representation in lieu of the present "winner-takes-all" method. Such a system would apportion the electoral votes of a state based on the popular vote in that state. Instead of making the Electoral College more representative, such proportional voting would increase the chance that no candidate would receive a majority in the Electoral College, thereby sending the election of the President to the House of Representatives where each state, regardless of population, would receive only one vote. Election of the President by the House further removes the decision from the people and is contrary to the "one person, one vote" principle. The League also does not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the President.

The 2002 Convention voted to expand and update the position. The League came to concurrence on a new position in June 2004, which takes into account the entire presidential selection process and supports a process that produces the best possible candidates, informed voters and optimum voter participation.

The 2008 Convention voted to conduct a study of the National Popular Vote proposal, which would establish the popular election of the President through a compact among the states governing how they would cast their votes in the Electoral College. The 2010 Convention amended the national position to support the National Popular Vote compact as another method of selecting the President until such time as the Electoral College is abolished.

The League's Position:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of

Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

Statement of Position on Selection of the President, as Announced by National Board, January 1970, Revised March 1982, Updated June 2004 and Revised by the 2010 Convention:

Background Material on Election of the President

Remarks by David Stewart:

David Stewart, a lawyer in Washington, D.C., is the author of *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution*, and other works on American history.

The presidential elector system is an anachronistic vestige of aristocratic attitudes, both undemocratic and easily manipulated. Its survival until 2013 reflects the power of inertia and founder worship. We should change it.

Recent legislative proposals in Virginia and Pennsylvania remind us that the elector system defeats fundamental principles of democracy. Republicans in both states have proposed abandoning the winner-take-all format for choosing electors, where all of the state's electoral votes go to the candidate who wins the statewide popular vote. Instead, they want to award electors according to vote totals in individual congressional districts. This would give Republican presidential candidates at least some electors in each state, which have both

gone Democratic in recent elections. Many have denounced the proposals as crass attempts to game election rules for partisan gain, yet they are perfectly consistent with the Constitution and our history.

At the 1787 Constitutional Convention, most delegates opposed popular election of the president. They were, after all, eighteenth-century patricians who mistrusted common people. Their views were based on premises that no longer apply. In 1787, many Americans could not read and lived isolated, rural lives with little access to news reports. Because most people knew little about public events or leaders from distant states, the convention delegates reasoned, they would not make a wise choice between presidential candidates. According to George Mason of Virginia, popular elections were the equivalent of asking a blind man to choose between colors.

Accordingly, the delegates contrived a system where

each state would choose presidential electors—presumably men of the better sort—who would gather to choose the best man for president. To indulge parochial political cultures in different parts of the country, each state would choose its electors in whatever fashion it wished. Thus, under Article II, Section 1, state legislatures have unfettered discretion to decide how to choose electors. They can pick the electors themselves, assign them according to the popular vote in each congressional district, or flip a coin.

In early elections, some states had their legislatures choose electors; South Carolina did so until 1868. Other states allowed the people to vote, assigning electors to a candidate on a winner-take-all basis. Still others awarded electors based on the popular vote in each congressional district, or blended different features.

Early politicians eagerly manipulated the system. Take, for example, the election of 1800. A year before the voting began, Virginia Republicans adopted the winner-take-all system to ensure that all of its electors supported local boy Thomas Jefferson. In Massachusetts, Federalists mimicked the move to prevent Jefferson from winking any of that state's electoral votes away from their favorite son, John Adams.

Then Maryland Federalists tried to replace that state's congressional-district system, which was likely to split votes between Adams and Jefferson, with choice by the state legislature, where the Federalists might do better. In bruising local elections, Republicans won enough legislative seats to short-circuit the scheme.

Read the U.S. News Debate: Should the United States Get Rid of the Electoral College?

Forty-eight states now follow the winner-take-all model. Maine and Nebraska assign most of their electors according to the popular vote in each congressional district, with two electors awarded based on the statewide vote. Yet every state remains free to follow the path most likely to favor the presidential candidate of that state's dominant party. The system virtually begs to be gamed.

Moreover, the elector system has other grievous flaws. Because each state's electoral vote total is based on the number of its congressmen plus senators, less-populated states have a modest but chronically exaggerated influence. That bias creates the risk that the candidate winning the most popular votes will lose the electoral contest; that happened in 1876, 1888, and 2000. Predictably, it will happen again.

Plus we now have "battleground" states and "safe states." Because most states predictably will vote either Democratic or Republican, presidential campaigns ignore them, a deeply alienating experience for the majority of citizens whose votes are taken for granted.

Since 1787, the world has changed in ways that undermine the rationale behind the elector system. News no longer takes weeks to travel from one end of the country to the other. Literacy is nearly universal, information about public events largely unavoidable, and geographic mobility easy. We have the technology for all Americans vote on a single day and have their votes counted promptly. Perhaps most important, Americans now believe in democracy. We even presume to export it.

We should try democracy. Inertia and founder worship should not be allowed to obscure the plain fact that the people should choose the president. If no candidate wins a majority, have a run-off between the top two finishers. Shoot, it even works in France and Louisiana.

Read Robert Schlesinger: GOP Attempt to Gerrymander the Electoral College Is the New Normal

Read Susan Milligan: The GOP's Attempted Electoral Sabotage

Check out U.S. News Weekly: an insider's guide to politics and policy.

Want to Check Out Campaign Contributions to the Fremont Mayor and City Council Contests? Here is the Information You Need

Miriam Keller asked the Fremont City Clerk how to find out information on campaign contributions to candidates for Fremont Mayor and City Council. Here is her reply to Miriam.

Below are the instructions for our FTP site to access Campaign forms:

1. Open any internet browser
2. Go to *ftp://ftpguest:guest123@cofftp.ci.fremont.ca.us/*
3. Select *City Clerk*
4. Select *2016 Campaign Statements*

Depending on the browser you are using, you may need to enter the user name and password before selecting a folder:

Username: *ftpguest*

Password: *guest123*

If you visit this page throughout the election period, you may need to Refresh pages to see newly uploaded documents.



I am enclosing \$60 for a gift membership in LWVFNUC for:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Mail to: LWVFNUC
P.O. Box 3218
Fremont, CA 94539

Thank You!!

D.O.W. &
DATE

Event

Time & Location

ALL MEETINGS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Mission

The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

LWVFNUC affirms its commitment to reflect the diversity of our communities in our membership and actions. We believe diverse views are important for responsible decision making and seek to work with all people and groups who reflect our community diversity.

Join the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY!

Any person, man or woman, who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League may join. To be a voting member, one must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen. Members under 18, or non-citizens, are welcome as non-voting Associate Members. Dues include membership in LWVFNUC, Bay Area League, and the California and National Leagues. Financial support for dues is available through our scholarship program. Contact Evelyn La Torre, Membership Chair, for information.

Name (s) _____

New Member Renewal

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