

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: August 2025



Hello LWVYC members,

August is here! Were you wondering where the summer heat went in July? Turns out it's here in August!! Hope you are staying cool.

As we move through the last month of summer, we want to be sure to thank those continuing members who have been renewing through the **LWVUS member portal**. If you are a continuing League member who has used the member portal to renew after receiving your renewal notice, how was that experience? **Please let us know!**

It's a lot easier for our local administration to have this process centralized. We appreciate the rapid turnaround confirmation of your renewal and hope this is a feature that is working well for you as well.

Donor Information

All members will see that our new portal includes an optional feature for a direct donation to our Yolo County League General Fund at the time of renewal. We are pleased to see this has been working well for so many of our renewing members.

Speaking of our General Fund, members are reminded that these dollars support our chapter's operational costs (e.g., space rental fees, technology fees, communication costs) and therefore are **not** tax-deductible. They are, nonetheless, necessary for us to do our community outreach and are very important.

For those seeking a tax-deductible option, please consider giving to our LWVYC Education Fund (we do need those donations, too!). While this is not an option on the renewal portal, members, friends, and family can donate, year-round, to our Education Fund (or our General Fund!) by using our **DONATE page**.

Board News Update

On August 6th, LWVYC Board members met for the annual retreat to set our 2025-26 schedule. We followed the **member-approved program plan** from the June Annual meeting to create a calendar of events for the year. These include many of the activities that members recommended to Membership Director **Kathleen Stack** and Events Director **Faye Smith-Gee** during the June meeting. Our three upcoming events directly reflect those member-requested actions.



A Note of Remembrance

Many of us in the League have had the privilege to work with long-time League members and community activists **Dan and Millie Braunstein** over the years. Sadly, we were advised of a severe illness that led to hospitalization for Dan, along with the very unexpected news of Millie's passing earlier this month. At the time of this writing, we are uncertain of Dan's health status.

We have reached out and sent our most sincere well wishes for Dan's recovery and condolences for Millie's passing to the family.

Millie Braunstein was an important voice for health equity, access, and quality in our community, our League, and our State. She was especially active in mental health advocacy and healthcare reform. As a retired Nurse and prior County Mental Health Board member, Millie was not just a vocal supporter for quality of care, but a knowledgeable, experienced resource who freely shared her expertise to advocate for the healthcare needs of many vulnerable patients and underrepresented communities. Millie's passing is a loss to her colleagues, our League, and our community. She will be dearly missed.

Events / Activities Update

We are delighted to be working on two events in September and one in October to start off our 2025-26 year. Save the dates and be on the lookout for more event information as it becomes available. More information about each event can be found in the Upcoming Events section below.

September Events

Youth Empowerment Summit (Y.E.S.): Wednesday & Thursday, September 24 & 25, in Davis on the UCD Campus

Join us as we work together with the Yolo County Office of Elections and Office of Education to promote youth civic engagement.

Sign up to Volunteer [HERE](#).

NAMI Walks! - Local Mental Health Services Support: Saturday, September 27, at Woodland Community College

Build mental health awareness by walking with our LWVYC-sponsored team,

"League of Women Voters Yolo County Walk Team". We'll represent our League efforts to highlight the importance of mental health services in our community. Get a little exercise while you help promote our new LWVYC Mental Health Advocacy Position.

Are you a tabler and not a walker? Good news!! We're tabling too! At the NAMIWalks! event, we'll offer League membership information along with voter registration and November ballot updates, as well as information on our new LWVYC position on Mental Health (with issue position copies and talking points).

Visit the LWVYC website, [Upcoming Events page](#) to learn more. Save the date and find Eventbrite links as they become available.

October Events

LWVYC Member Meeting/ DEMOCRACY WORKS Award: Thursday, October 9, in Davis at the Veterans' Memorial Center

Our first member meeting of 2025-26 will bring us together in October to honor this year's **DEMOCRACY WORKS Award** recipients. Join us for this recognition along with Voter Service, Election Forum, Ballot Issue Advocacy, and Community Outreach news.

The October member meeting is still in its planning stages, so look to our September VOTER newsletter and LWVYC website to provide more details and "Save the Date" information.

As we start gearing up for fall, we hope you will stay engaged and stay informed! Act locally to defend democracy and support our community!

Hope to see you all at our September events and the first member meeting in October!

Warm Regards,

Michelle Famula, President
LWV Yolo County
president@lwvyolo.org

Advocacy News

League Opposes Voter Suppression - League Challenges Partisan Redistricting

Our local League continues to receive state and national League "Action Calls" to support voting rights and fight voter suppression. Members are encouraged to **oppose the SAVE Act** and **support the John Lewis Voting Rights Act** by contacting their state and federal representatives in support of voter protections. LWVYC members are also encouraged to use these links to invite friends and family to join you in efforts to defend democracy and support voting

rights!

NEW Developments in August compel us to revisit the anti-democratic practice of partisan redistricting by gerrymander.

Since 2008, California has been on the cutting edge of **nonpartisan** Citizen Committee redistricting. LWV has helped lead this pro-democracy effort both in-state and at the national level. Now, August 2025 brings a showdown between our federal and state executive leadership: both seeking to use the gerrymander to achieve "party-in-power" advantage.

Our Governor's call for a November 4th mid-cycle **REDISTRICTING BALLOT MEASURE** to enhance partisan congressional representation has elicited statements of opposition from both State and National LWV advocacy directors.

Where does the League's opposition to gerrymandering stand today?

Latest Update as of August 20th: *LWVC's Interim Executive Director advises members that the LWVC "opposition to mid-cycle redistricting" statement released on August 8 was made without any proposed legislation to consider. The Executive Director notes that final LWVC positions on proposed ballot measure(s) are made by the LWVC Board once language is introduced as legislation. At that time, a final LWVC position and any further action will be fully considered, determined, and announced.*

You can learn more about the important history of LWVC efforts to champion California's successful 2008 non-partisan Citizen Redistricting Commission ballot measure, **Proposition 11**, [HERE](#).

LWVC and LWVUS position statements to date include:

Read LWVC President, **Gloria Chung Hoo's** Sacramento Bee Op-Ed opposing mid-cycle redistricting and supporting our 2008 California voter-approved, non-partisan Citizen Redistricting Commission [HERE](#).

Read the LWVC Opposition Position on Mid-cycle Redistricting [HERE](#).

Read LWVC Deputy Director, **Dora Rose's** Letter to Governor Newsom and Legislators Re: *League of Women Voters of California Opposition to Mid-Cycle Redistricting* [HERE](#)

Read LWVUS CEO **Celina Stewart's** league statement opposing federally inspired, state-supported partisan mid-cycle gerrymandering efforts [HERE](#).

Do you want to tell your state and federal legislators that you oppose both state gerrymandering and federal voter suppression, and that you support California's 2008 voter-approved, non-partisan Citizen Redistricting Commissions? Check [HERE](#) to find your state senate and assembly representatives, and [HERE](#) to find your Federal House and Senate legislators. Raise your voice; let them know your opinion.

PLEASE NOTE: Contacts to the California Governor's office on behalf of any League position are managed by LWVC board leadership. Contacts to Federal House and Senate Leaders are managed by the LWVUS board leadership.

State and National Leagues ask members to confine personal communications to their own representatives when supporting the League position. These personal constituent contacts are also likely to be your most impactful communications.

Membership Activities

Reaching Out to Members Seeking Committee Involvement and Program Service

This month, Membership Committee members will be reaching out to you if you provided "interest area" feedback on your membership form or the survey forms at the Annual meeting. They'll be looking to connect you to committee chairs, events, and activities unique to your interests. Keep your eyes open for emails from LWVYC committee chairs and board members helping to guide you toward League happenings that match your interests.

Upcoming Events (Save the Date)

Y.E.S. Summit: September 24 & 25 (Wednesday/Thursday)

This year, our Yolo County League is again actively supporting our county's **8th Annual Youth Empowerment Summit (YES!)**. On **September 25th**, our members will join the Yolo County Office of Elections and other local civic organizations to help educate high school youth about local government and the election process, as well as the importance of voter participation and civic engagement.

We need Volunteers!

Would you like to volunteer? We will have opportunities to help with event setup on the day before (**Sept. 24**), as well as tabling and information presentation on the day of the event.

Volunteer to Encourage Future Leaders

NAMI Walks!: September 27 (Saturday)

Our League is sponsoring our own walk team: "League of Women Voters Yolo County Team". LWVYC Vice President and Healthcare Committee member **Stephanie Degraff-Hunt** has stepped up to be our walk team captain and will be coordinating our walk team. Visit the LWVYC website [Upcoming Events page](#) to learn more about the NAMI Walks! event.

To make a donation to NAMI with a pledge supporting our "League of Women Voters Yolo County" WalkTeam, go [HERE](#). To sign up to walk with our team, help provide LWVYC Mental Health position outreach, or staff our voter information table on September 27th, contact us at LWVYolo@gmail.com. Walk team members will be making signage in advance of the event promoting our League position and Mental Health.

Help us support Mental Health for
All

2025 Democracy Works Award and Membership Meeting: October 9 (Thursday)

LWVYC will hold our first 2025-26 member meeting in mid-October. Agenda items include an update on the November ballot, voter forums, issue position advocacy, and membership activities. This meeting will conclude with our celebratory recognition of this year's **Democracy Works Award** recipient(s).

Calling for Nominations: Democracy Works!!

Nominations remain open: Submission deadline September 1, 2025. We are still seeking nominees from throughout Yolo County. If you know an organization or individual the award committee should consider, [please complete a nomination form today](#).

We welcome nominations for individuals and/or organizations whose actions include encouraging equal representation, promoting free and fair elections, expanding voter education and voting rights, advocating for legislation that promotes democracy in our communities, or taking grassroots political action.

To learn more, visit our [Democracy Works webpage](#), where you will find an online form and a PDF form to download, complete, and mail to:

LWV of Yolo County Democracy Works Award P.O. Box 2463
Woodland, CA 95776.

Submit a Nomination

Committee and League Service Updates

Healthcare - Mental Health (MH) Position shifts to Advocacy

LWVYC MH study committee members and Healthcare committee members have shifted efforts from issue study to issue advocacy. Study Committee members with continuing interest in mental health advocacy have joined the Healthcare Committee to plan and implement our 2025-26 advocacy actions

for the **LWVYC County Mental Health Issue Position**. The committee is always looking for additional members with an advocacy interest.

The Healthcare committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 3:00-4:30 pm, to plan advocacy activities. This committee will also meet bimonthly (2nd and 4th Tues.) to hear from key county mental health service experts as needed.

The committee last met on August 10th to hear from outgoing NAMI CEO, Jen Boschee-Danzer, regarding county mental health budget challenges and the anticipated impact on prevention programs and NAMI funding. Committee members are attending County Mental Health Board and Board of Supervisors meetings as community observers to gain a greater understanding of budget and funding challenges to County mental health services and programs.

Promoting our County Mental Health Service Advocacy: LWVYC kicks off our MH Position advocacy by supporting Yolo County's "NAMI Walks!" event on **September 27th**.

Interested in becoming a member of the healthcare committee to advocate for county mental health services or explore other areas of health policy? Please contact lwvyolo@gmail.com to learn more about our work.

Housing Committee: Davis General Plan

LWVYC Housing Committee Chair **Mary Jo Bryan** reminds members interested in Housing issues to keep attuned to Davis General Plan update developments.

On August 13th, the City began its General Plan update with a **Davis 2050 General Plan Update workshop** at the Davis Senior Center. It was a packed house, and LWVYC Housing Committee members were in attendance. Community members were given the opportunity to share their interests, concerns, and thoughts on reshaping the City's long-term vision for the next 20 years.

The **LWVYC Housing Committee** is looking forward to participating in the City's proposed community engagement process and will team with Davis Community Action Network (DCAN) and Davis Interfaith Housing Justice Committee (IHJC) to support the City's goal for a "robust community engagement process".

The League welcomes all members to join in this effort and to get involved. LWVYC Davis residents should check out the City of Davis website and **take the City's Survey**.

In accordance with the Yolo County League's voter education goals, the Housing Committee will be planning a future forum to educate all league members on the ins and outs of housing access, affordability, and sustainability issues county-wide, as well as county-wide municipal general planning efforts.

The LWVYC has an active Housing Committee. If housing and other

community services in Davis, Woodland, and other Yolo County cities and rural areas are important to you, please contact lwvyolo@gmail.com to learn more.

Update: LWVYC Outreach: Esparto

League President Michelle Famula and Voter Services Director Judy Higgerson have reached out to the **Esparto Regional Chamber** and will provide a presentation to introduce them to our new League on September 11th.

Thanks to Judy's perseverance, LWVYC continues to identify new opportunities for partnership and community connections around the county. Judy will definitely have us well-connected for voter outreach before the next round of elections.

JOIN!

DONATE!

Click on LWVYolo.org for more information about our new League!

League of Women Voters of Yolo County | P.O. Box 2463 | Woodland, CA 95776 US

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