

DEMOCRACY WORKS

FALL | 2021



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF CALIFORNIA

11 | LWVC EDUCATION FUND TAKES
HOME EIGHT NATIONAL AWARDS!



Direct Line



Carol Moon Goldberg
Board President

Hello League Members and Supporters!

I must start this close-of-the-year newsletter with an appreciation for the work of all the Leagues in California during the past year.

Just as the LWVC wrapped up the biennial convention of June 2021, the date for the Governor Recall Election was set for September. Armed with an LWVC toolkit in multiple languages, Leagues up and down the state supplied Californians with the information they needed to vote by mail and understand the two questions on that ballot. Thank you all for taking information to voters to help them feel knowledgeable enough and confident enough to participate in our democracy.

Speaking of helping Californians to participate in our democracy...our California Leagues are actively engaged in a historic redistricting process. It is the second time the California Citizens Redistricting Commission is operating, the first time some cities and counties are operating with specific criteria for

district line drawing under the Fair MAPS Act, and the first time some local jurisdictions have their own citizens redistricting commissions. Using the LWVC toolkit on local redistricting, Leagues are educating Californians about what redistricting is, why they should care about it, and how to be involved. Operating independently and by joining forces with over 90 partners across the state, Leagues offered over 25 events and met with 70 elected and appointed officials about redistricting.

Across the state and across initiatives, Leagues are illustrating how people can effectively participate in the process, and working closely with under-represented groups to ensure that a diversity of voices is present in the process.

Why is the League doing all this? We know that in a representative democracy, the will of the people must drive government decision making and public policy. The League advocated for the creation of the statewide Commission, the Fair MAPS Act, and resident line drawing commissions at all levels of government. Now that the system is in place, the LWVC, its members, and supporters continue to work to make it work. Thank you for your support.



Stephanie Doute
Executive Director

I love this time of year. It always makes me slow down just a little bit for some reflection and gratitude.

First – gratitude. I am in constant awe of the amazing work that all of you are doing to engage your communities in our democracy and ensure that we have a government that works for the people, not vice versa. From registering voters, to monitoring polls, getting out the vote, engaging in community redistricting, and so much more – you bring our democracy to the people and the people to our democracy. Thank you.

Second – reflection. This year was more critical than ever to our democracy, and in response the LWVC has grown to the challenge in both our advocacy and voter-education and engagement work. As anti-democracy forces seek to sow distrust in our systems of government, our work to unlock democracy is paramount and expanding.

In the last decade, we have nearly tripled the total number of bills on which we advocate in our priority issue areas. While our Making Democracy Work advocacy has remained steady over time as one of our mission critical issue areas, we have increased the number of social policy bills we work on by 360 percent, and have increased our work on natural resources bills by 225 percent. Just in the last three years, we have increased the number of bills on which we advocate in these

two areas by 54 percent. Our impact is huge. The League's voice and influence grows stronger in creating a more just and equitable future in California each year.

Through Voter's Edge, *Easy Voter Guide*, *Pros & Cons*, the Recall Election Toolkit, and our Get Out the Vote Efforts, our impact in voter education and engagement, particularly in more diverse California communities, has also grown significantly. Our recall election toolkit and resources were available in nine languages, and we partnered with numerous California voting and civil rights organizations to provide education to diverse voters across the state. We have reached over nine million voters with in-language, non-partisan, understandable voter education in the past two years. That's more than three times our impact in prior years!

Together, our work is creating a more equitable future for all Californians – and we are doing more of it than ever before. Together, we are working to unlock the promise of our democracy for all Californians.

I hope that you take some time to reflect, find gratitude in all the work we've done together this year, recover, and surround yourself with those you love this season. The work we do is difficult and demanding. We must take time to take care of ourselves so that we can carry on fighting the good fight. I wish you a season of peace, love, and rest.

FALL 2021

FALL 2021



Legislative Update

If we've learned anything in 2021, it's that things don't happen with the flip of a switch. We have to fight for what our communities need step by step.

We face this same reality in our advocacy work: we have to fight for every ounce of progress. And that's exactly what we did. We brought back several bills that died in the chaos last year and made sure they were signed into law. We endeavored to improve existing laws and hold our government accountable to the voters. We met new problems head on by crafting sound public policy to remedy them. We have accomplished so much this year, and none of it would have been possible without you.

In this 2021 Advocacy Wrap-Up, you can read highlights of our hard-earned victories, some lamentable delays, and a preview of our goals for next year. As always, detailed letters related to all the bills on which we took positions may be found in our Bill Status Report.

Our Biggest Wins

More Equitable Voter Registration at the DMV

AB 796 (Berman) was our highest priority bill this year because it will improve the voter registration process at the DMV and help more of the 3 million eligible, yet unregistered Californians register and vote. The bill builds on the success of California's Motor Voter program, codifies best practices developed through the LWVC lawsuit and settlement agreement with the DMV, requires greater transparency and training, and removes impediments to equitable voter registration. Thanks to your support, this bill is now law.

Revitalizing the California Dream

Housing policies that restrict building have contributed to a severe shortage of affordable homes in our state. We successfully supported a package of bills that will incentivize the production of more houses, increase the housing supply, open up rental units, expand the availability of affordable housing, and make the dream of homeownership a reality for more Californians.

- SB 8 (Skinner) extends the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 to continue to streamline the development of homes in California by prohibiting local actions that reduce housing capacity.
- SB 9 (Atkins) allows qualifying homeowners to split their property into two lots and build two homes on each lot.
- SB 10 (Wiener) enables communities to ease some of the barriers to building small multifamily developments.
- SB 478 (Wiener) removes barriers that disincentivize the building of multi-family homes in areas that already zone for them.

We will continue working on more solutions to generate affordable housing and provide meaningful solutions to the homelessness crisis, while keeping in mind additional intersectional challenges such as climate change, transportation, mental health services, and more.

Accountability for Safer Communities

California has finally caught up with 46 other states, and will establish a process to decertify law enforcement officers who have committed serious misconduct. The LWVC lobbied hard, in coalition with other organizations, to ensure the passage of SB 2 (Bradford), which makes our communities safer by ensuring peace officers who are convicted of felonies or other serious crimes that violate a person's civil rights are held accountable and prevented from committing further misconduct.

Educational Enrichment

Ethnic Studies will be a graduation requirement in California public and charter high schools starting with the class of 2030. AB 101 (Medina) mandates an ethnic studies course that promotes respect and understanding among races, supports student success, and teaches critical thinking skills. We advocated for this bill because it allows our educational system to move past the Eurocentric lens that is the dominant frame for interpreting United States history and life, a perspective that fails to validate the existence of the majority of California students.

"We will continue working on more solutions to generate affordable housing and provide meaningful solutions to the homelessness crisis, while keeping in mind additional intersectional challenges such as climate change, transportation, mental health services, and more."

More Victories

The following are a few highlights from the nearly 70 pieces of legislation that the League advocated for in 2021. Many bills we supported have been carried over into the second year of the legislative session and we will continue our advocacy to help pass them in 2022.

- California will count more eligible ballots after the passage of SB 503 (Becker), written to ensure that mailed and provisional ballots are not improperly rejected during the signature comparison process.
- Campaign finance transparency was advanced by the passage of SB 686 (Glazer), requiring limited liability companies engaged in campaign activity to provide information about its members and their capital contributions.
- Timelines and definitions for local redistricting were clarified by SB 594 (Glazer), which will help alleviate stress on local officials and ensure there is time for robust community engagement.
- State protections against foreign interference in state and local elections have been put in place with AB 319 (Valladares), which prohibits contributions, expenditures, and independent expenditures by foreign governments and foreign principals in connection with state and local candidate elections.
- Carbon sequestration was advanced by SB 27 (Skinner), which will help the state meet its objectives by identifying goals and projects to sequester carbon in natural and working lands.



- Community-based organizations will respond to certain emergencies instead of the police under a pilot program established by AB 118 (Kamlager), the CRISES Act. The program is designed to fill a void in community-based emergency response services for vulnerable populations, and allow them to safely access culturally appropriate, quality emergency services from trained professionals.
- Mandatory minimum sentences for certain non-violent drug offenses has been repealed, and discretion to judges has been restored, with the passage of SB 73 (Wiener). Justice is advanced by promoting sentencing based on the circumstances of individual cases.
- A Youth Empowerment Commission will be established pursuant to the passage of AB 46 (Luz Rivas). The Commission will give young Californians the opportunity to engage directly with policymakers about issues important to California's next generation of leaders. Also relevant to California's youth is AB 309 (Gabriel) which directs the Department of Education to create guidance and resources that schools can use to better address students' mental health concerns, and AB 469 (Reyes), which will connect more students with financial aid by informing them of their eligibility and helping them better understand the application process.

Moving in the Right Direction

You'll Receive Your Ballot in the Mail. Then What?

With AB 37 (Berman), every registered voter in the state will receive a ballot in the mail ahead of each election. While universal mailing of ballots is important to expand voter access, it is not without risks that disproportionately impact underrepresented Californians and those to whom vote-by-mail is unfamiliar or inaccessible. The League maintained a support if amended position because a robust voter education and outreach campaign should be required and structured to capitalize on the expertise

of community-based and other good government organizations. While some of our requested amendments were included in the bill (e.g. mandatory Dropboxes and making the remote vote-by-mail process available to all voters), it did not include required voter education and outreach. We will continue to advocate for voter education funding in 2022.

Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

Unfortunately, the Racial Justice Act for All (AB 256 Kalra), to make the Racial Justice Act of 2020 retroactive, is stuck in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The League is helping lead the charge to get this co-sponsored bill back on track in January. The legislation will provide relief for currently and formerly incarcerated people who experienced racial discrimination in their court proceedings. While the delay is disappointing, we remain deeply committed to ensuring that no one is left behind and that everyone with unfair convictions and sentences has an opportunity to pursue justice.

"We remain deeply committed to ensuring that no one is left behind and that everyone with unfair convictions and sentences has an opportunity to pursue justice."

Beyond Bills

Our work goes beyond legislation. We also work to guide effective implementation of bills that pass, and we advise the work of key state agencies to ensure they meet the needs of Californians.

- Implementation of Prop 17: Voting Rights for People Who Have Completed Their Prison Term. Californians made history last year when we voted to restore voting rights to people on parole. However, restoring the right to vote is only half the battle. We also need to ensure people who are leaving prison and are on parole know about their rights and how to register



and vote. We will continue our work with the Secretary of State and Governor's office to properly implement Prop 17 to ensure that people on parole have the tools they need to participate in our democracy.

- Citizens Redistricting Commission. LWVC Board Director Helen Hutchison and former LWVUS President Chris Carson lead our work with the state's redistricting commission. Most recently the League, along with coalition partners, filed an amicus letter in support of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission's emergency motion asking the California Supreme Court to extend the Commission's redistricting deadline in light of unprecedented Census delays. The California Supreme Court did not agree to the extended deadlines requested. The first set of draft district maps were submitted on November 15, and the final district maps must be delivered to the Secretary of State by December 27, 2021.
- Fair Political Practices Commission. Jenny Waggoner (LWV San Francisco) and Katie Zoglin (LWV Los Altos/Mountain View) represented the LWVC on the FPPC's Digital Transparency Task Force and greatly contributed to its recently-issued Report & Recommendations to Governor Newsom and the California legislature.

Looking Forward

The final ballot had not yet been cast in the Recall Election before pundits and state leaders began discussing the possibility of reforming the recall process. We will watch carefully as this conversation unfolds, maintain a presence at legislative hearings, and advocate to ensure that reforms benefit California's voters.

As we enter a statewide election year, we are starting to analyze potential ballot measures. The League is currently supporting the following four constitutional amendments, which if approved by the legislature, would then need to be approved by the voters in June or November.

- SCA 1 (Hertzberg) would switch the meaning of a "yes" vote and a "no" vote on referendum measures to make the meaning more intuitive for voters.
- SCA 2 (Allen) would repeal Article 34 of the California Constitution, which prevents the development of certain types of low-income housing unless it is first approved by voters.
- ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry) would lower the vote threshold for the approval of local general obligation bonds and certain special taxes from two-thirds to 55 percent.
- ACA 4 (Kiley) would shift the responsibility for writing titles and summaries and ballot labels for statewide measures from the Attorney General to the Legislative Analyst.

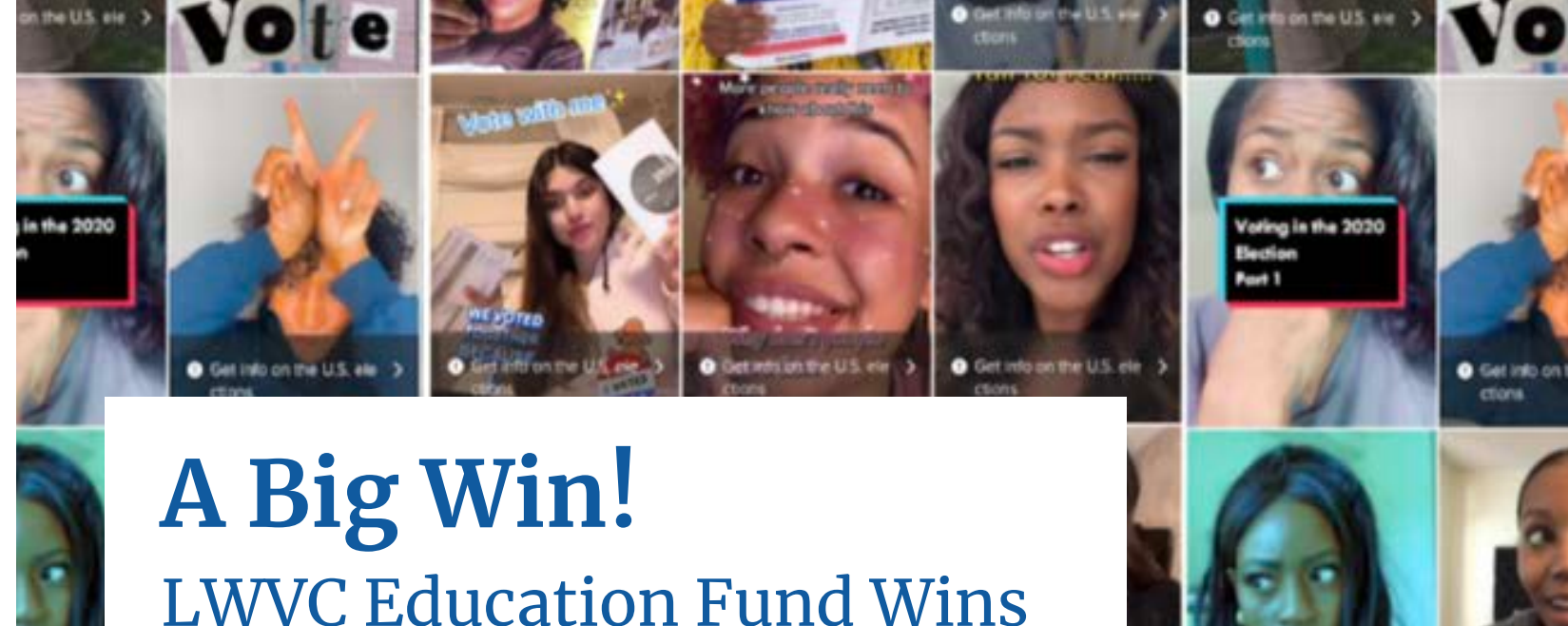
League in Action

The Gubernatorial Recall Election

The 2021 Gubernatorial Recall Election was fraught with disinformation seeking to disenfranchise voters and seed mistrust in our electoral systems. The LWVC Education Fund was on the front lines of voter education and engagement with plain language, nonpartisan voter education and outreach - translated into nine languages - to **ensure that all of California's diverse voters had what they needed to confidently cast a ballot**. We reached over 1.5 million voters, primarily in historically under-resourced communities, with:

Non-English Media Outlets	Non-partisan voter education information was placed in over 20 in-language media outlets across the state, reaching approximately one million Californians in Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish.
Text Banking	League volunteers sent over 50,000 text messages to Black voters across the state, encouraging them to cast their ballot and answering any questions they had about the logistics of voting.
Postcarding	The LWVC Education Fund (EF) sent 60,000 Spanish voter education postcards to Spanish-speaking residents in California's Central Valley.
Snapchat and Social Media	On Snapchat, we reached over 500,000 youth voters between the ages of 18-24 across California encouraging them to vote, providing access to Voter's Edge for nonpartisan election information, and helping them use their voice to encourage their peers to vote.
Recall Election Toolkit	The LWVC EF created a Recall election toolkit to allow local Leagues and other community partners access to plain language voter education to counter disinformation about the Recall election and our electoral systems. Through collaboration with our partners - NALEO Education Fund and Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus - these materials were available in up to nine languages to ensure that all of California's diverse voters could access the information they needed in the ways most relevant to them.

No matter how hard bad actors work to create confusion and perpetuate misinformation about our elections and electoral systems, the LWVC Education Fund is always working to provide Californians with the **nonpartisan, factual information** they need to have the desire, knowledge, and confidence to vote.



A Big Win!

LWVC Education Fund Wins Eight National Awards for Get-Out-the-Vote Efforts

In the 2020 election, the LWVC Education Fund earned grants to design and execute a cutting-edge digital get-out-the-vote campaign designed to increase voter turnout in 18-24 year olds with a specific focus on young Black and Latino/a/x voters.



Working with our partners at Mixte Communications, the TikTok and Snapchat campaign centered the voices of diverse youth content creators to drive their peers to vote. Wildly exceeding even the most ambitious goals, the campaign reached more than six million people and provided a case study in the effectiveness of meeting youth voters where they are, in ways that resonate with them to drive voting and civic engagement.

The campaign has since received a total of **eight national awards from the Public Relations Society of America, Hispanic Public Relations Association, and Platinum PR Awards.**

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Silver Anvil Awards honor outstanding strategic public relations programs. Our campaign to activate youth voices for voter turnout won awards in the following categories:

- National Silver Anvil – Influencer Marketing Program To Expand Awareness – Micro-Influencers
- National Silver Anvil – Multicultural Public Relations
- National Bronze Anvil – Tik Tok Campaign
- National Award of Commendation Bronze Anvil – Creative Tactics

The Hispanic Public Relations Association (HPRA) 2021 National ¡Bravo! Awards recognize the best multicultural public relations teams and campaigns in the country. Our campaign won in the following categories:

- ¡Bravo! Award! – Public Affairs Campaign
- ¡Bravo! Award! – Social Justice Campaign

The 2021 Platinum PR Awards honor the communicators who reached the pinnacle of innovation and industry knowledge. Our campaign won in the following categories:

- Platinum PR Award – Community Engagement
- Platinum PR Award – Public Affairs

The LWVC Education Fund is proud to be on the cutting edge of digital youth civic engagement as we look to the future and how we continue to unlock democracy for Californians of all ages and backgrounds.

Leaguers in the Limelight

Jenny Tse, Studying a long ballot led to leading criminal justice reform

Jenny Tse was born and raised in San Francisco and graduated from San Jose State University in 2016. That year, both California and San Francisco had very long ballots filled with dozens of complicated ballot measures. After looking at her ballot, Jenny realized she needed a better way to make informed choices on Election Day.

After an online search through MeetUp, Jenny found the League of Women Voters of San Francisco's Pros & Cons forum. Soon after, she joined the voter service team, and as time passed, Jenny's role changed to include a role on the ballot recommendation team.

These days, Jenny serves as the League of Women Voters San Francisco (LWVSF) Advocacy Co-Chair. Jenny was a founding member of the LWV of California Criminal Justice Task Force in 2018 and helped to develop its criminal justice position that was adopted in 2019. In 2020, Jenny became co-chair of the LWVC Criminal Justice Committee.

One of Jenny's most notable contributions has been through her work on the LWVC's Criminal Justice Reform Committee. Criminal justice reform became a greater area of interest for Jenny during the past decade of police involved shootings in San Francisco. Recently, one of the victims turned out to be a friend from elementary school.

"It brought home how justice issues impact everyone. I am most proud of bringing our state level criminal justice reform position to fruition with the goal of making it a national position since when I joined, it didn't exist," Jenny commented.

Jenny is very proud of the League's long history of voting rights activism and sees a bright future for the organization in other issues areas like criminal justice reform and the climate crisis. "There are so many opportunities where the League could lend its name for advocacy efforts," she added.



Why would she tell you to join the League?

"If you have an issue you are very passionate about and you want to get involved at a local or state level, the League gives you opportunities to learn and impact others," Jenny stated. "One of the most gratifying parts of being in the League are the intergenerational interactions. It is rewarding to get insight from different generations and points of view," she added.

Outside of her busy League life, Jenny is an avid open-water swimmer. She swims in the San Francisco Bay, including nine swims to Alcatraz and four swims along the Golden Gate Bridge.

"Open water swimming has been one of my bright spots during COVID, and has taught me a lot about myself and what I'm capable of doing if I work at it," added Jenny.

Crownie Billik, Mentoring Leagues for a lifetime

Crownie Billik grew up in Detroit, Michigan and after receiving a bachelor's in Anthropology from the University of Michigan, and a master's of social work from Wayne State University, she became the Teen Director for the Jewish Community Center and eventually the New England Regional Director at the B'nai Brith Youth Organization in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Crownie met her husband Martin Billik, and married him in 1959 before moving to Los Altos, California.

In 1971, Crownie attended a League of Women Voters candidates' forum in the Los Altos community, joining hundreds of others looking to find out more about what was on their ballot. Crownie was looking for a democratic organization she could join, and found it that day! After joining the League and showing interest in voter education, she was added to the Voter Service Committee and started a mentorship with co-presidents Babara Walker and Susan Younkin that would last many years.

"These mentors helped me stay engaged with the League and arranged for me to have special sessions with active League members to answer my questions. They shared a training chart about what the League is and how to set up a democratic decision making structure of the League and responsibilities, I loved it."



Martin Billik (left) and Crownie (right) in Asilomar

Now a 51-year member, Crownie has held many roles with the League. She's been President, County Voter Service Chair, Social Policy Portfolio, Membership Director, Nominating Committee Chair, and State League Management Training Advisor (MTA) for local Leagues around the Bay Area. Crownie's favorite role was being a Management Training Advisor, now known as Local League Coach (LLC). She mentored dozens of Leagues and hundreds of League members across California during this 30 year volunteer role.

"Each League is so different, with its own history and feeling about who they are. Helping each of them allowed me to work with very interesting people and support League growth. I am most proud of being a role model and helping nurture others to become local League coaches," Crownie says.

Crownie's long time friend and fellow League member Sue Graham added, "Crownie brought to her work a clear vision, an adherence to protocol and a gentle manner. As a member of the Nominating Committee, she was able to coax even the most reluctant person to try a turn on the board of directors. The League is a better organization because of Crownie's contributions."

Where does Crownie see the League going in the future?

"I think the League will survive and thrive for the next generation. Leagues are constantly reinventing themselves. All of them are now in that process and have new energy to help them. Highly motivated members are really one of the best qualities that all the Leagues have. A hundred years from now there will always be a need for Leagues to present election information and help the public understand other issues that face our communities."

Crownie has received recognition in and outside of the League, including the 2015 John Gardner award from the Los Altos Community Foundation for her contributions. She also is an accomplished sculptor, swimmer, and baker. Crownie published a cookbook in the 1970s and is well-known for making scones. One League member mentioned, "Wherever Crownie went, the scones were sure to follow."

Crownie is retiring from the League at age 91 and plans to enjoy time with her husband Martin and her children Tamara and Shoshana.

Her final advice to the League?

"The future is there and I want everyone to continue what they are doing but do a little bit more."

UNLOCK DEMOCRACY

Help Unlock Democracy Today

Right now, the voices of millions of people across California are at risk of being deliberately silenced by those who would pretend to be gatekeepers of our democracy. We need your help to ensure that doesn't happen. Your contribution will help us Unlock Democracy by creating the tools we need to fight misinformation and voter suppression.

Donate at
bit.ly/LWVCEFUnlock
or scan the QR code:



Other Ways to Contribute:

Donate Online

Support during this time is more important than ever. Support the LWVC during this crucial time:
lwvc.org/donate

Become a Monthly Donor

Becoming a monthly donor gives us a voice. Together we can ensure elections are free, fair, accessible, and reduce the influence of money in our elections. Become a monthly donor at lwvc.org/monthly

Donate Stock

As the tax year comes to a close and you are thinking how best to donate your dollars, please consider giving a gift of stock to the LWVC Education Fund. Donate stock, the best democracy investment you can make: bit.ly/LWVCEFStock

Honor a Loved One

Send a card to someone you care about in honor of a birthday, in memory of someone's life, or for any special reason. More at lwvc.org/tribute

Legacy Giving

Help us unlock democracy for future generations of Californians by including the League in your estate planning: lwvc.org/legacy