



Be a powerful force for change in California

November 12, 2014

Dear Friend,

Being the President of the League of Women Voters of California is turning out to be quite an adventure! As you can see from the enclosed to-do list, 2014 was a big success! Next year holds even more promise, and we need your support to continue the legislative victories and expanded voter education that have made this year so remarkable.

You can help with your generous gift to the League of Women Voters of California.

With your donation, we will continue to be a powerful force for change in California and make a meaningful difference in people's lives. People like new Oakland voter, Cleze Printers.

I met Cleze this fall when she took part in an LWV Oakland community review session for the *Easy Voter Guide* at the Next Step Learning Center. Cleze has never voted, though she thinks she may have registered in the past.

She came away inspired to vote, saying,

*"I felt great about being part of the review process because I never would have come across anyone who could have explained it as well. I felt good about putting my own input as well—I never did something like that before. I had no recollection of anything about the guide or voting. It helped me understand and ... **It makes me want to vote in the future.**"*

Cleze's story illustrates the importance of easy-to-read voter information and the crucial role it can play in improving voter turnout in our state. That's why we subject the *Easy Voter Guide* to community review with potential voters like Cleze and publish in California's five most common languages.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

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In addition to the *Easy Voter Guide* project, we continue to educate millions of California voters through candidate forums and our *Pros & Cons* and *In Depth* on the propositions.

We're also working with MapLight to provide even better online ballot information.

This fall, we launched Voter's Edge, a pilot partnership between Smart Voter and MapLight that provides a next-generation, one-stop site for voters to learn about the candidates and measures on their ballots, including campaign funding analysis. As I write this, the new partnership has doubled our reach—we're serving twice as many voters.

Collectively, our Education Fund helps millions of Californians cast their ballots—many for the very first time.

The League depends on an amazing network of volunteer leaders to make that impact.

Our grassroots work begins among League members as we help each other build the confidence and skills to tackle California's important issues. Barb Singleton is a new League member who joined in 2013. Here is her story in her own words:

"The League has done wonders for me. I joined mainly because of the money in politics issue ... It was a direct match for what I care about. ... At the first meeting I went to with LWV Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville, Linda Swift immediately helped me, and I was able to start a committee there. I asked Linda if I should go to the LWVC Convention in San Jose—she said, 'Go,' so I did it! That was a great experience."

Through working on the *Pros & Cons* for her local League, Barb got involved with the City of Emeryville. For the November 2014 election, she worked with the mayor to educate homeowners about local ballot measures and register voters. She says, *"Everything I've learned with the League, I'm now putting into action on a real issue in Emeryville."*

"Every single thing that I've done has been a personal challenge for me. I didn't think I could do it, but it was a win-win situation because a League person helped me. ... I put in my effort, and it was matched by the League. I feel like a definite contributor."

"I believe totally in the League mission, and I've been so fortunate to be hooked up with people along the way who've pushed me in the right way. I'm a better person because of the League of Women Voters. I'm proud of my work. I'm proud of my growth."

As a donor myself, I believe that our greatest assets are our grassroots members and leaders. **With your help, we can continue to recruit, train, and support leaders across California.**

Their leadership puts us on the front lines expanding voting rights and building a better California.

Despite our many legislative successes this year, much remains to be done. In 2015, we will:

- Renew efforts to sponsor and support legislation that improves the disclosure of campaign funding and outlaws ethically dubious practices.
- Push for measures to protect the voting rights of minority and disadvantaged groups and clarify the voting rights of people in the criminal justice system. This includes our work in the *Scott v. Bowen* lawsuit to reverse a Secretary of State memo restricting the rights of people affected by realignment.
- Support early childhood education proposals because every child needs a strong foundation for a successful education.

With your help, 2015 will be a banner year for Californians—with improved transparency in government, better civics and election information, expanded suffrage, and real legislative reform limiting the influence of money in politics.

Check out our enclosed to-do list for 2015 and let us know what else you think we should tackle. It's easy to share your ideas: just return the card with your donation.

Your gift will go a long way, thanks to the dedication of the League's grassroots volunteers—our partners on the ground every day, all over California. The hours they devote help us to stretch every cent of your dollar to improve voter education and fight for the important issues in our state. I can't think of a better investment.

Sincerely,



Helen L. Hutchison
President, LWVC

P.S. Your generous gift ensures we can support our members, who tirelessly pursue better public policy and a more educated and engaged electorate. This includes our volunteers who are hard at work conducting research for our Higher Education study. Their work will empower the League to take action on all levels of education in California and advocate on issues that impact preschool through university.