

*The League is not an end in itself.
We are a training ground for democracy.
That is what we have always been
and that is what we will always be.*

*Elisabeth MacNamara
President, LWVUS*



November 20, 2013

Dear League Friend,

Have you heard anything like this lately?

“The government can’t get anything done.”

“Voting makes absolutely no difference.”

“You can’t trust anyone in politics.”

Sadly, feelings like these are common today. You can hear them on the street, in school hallways, and at the dinner table. The League of Women Voters of California exists to act in direct opposition to these ideas. We model a healthy democracy and train new leaders in good government. How can the League engage Californians in their democracy, when so many believe government is irrevocably broken? Through the tenacious work of our members—but we need your help.

Here’s my promise to you. You can help invigorate our democracy right now with a gift to the League of Women Voters of California. Your support ensures we will continue to advocate for good government, educate voters, and grow leaders who will defend democracy.

How exactly are we doing that?

We’re Changing the Rules! (19 of them)

Over the past year, we have advocated tirelessly against the influence of money in California politics. Working at the state and grassroots level, we supported bills that would prevent “dark money” contributions to proposition campaigns and streamline the disclosure process—always championing greater public scrutiny. We expect both Senate Bills 2 and 27 to finish the legislative process quickly early in 2014—with help from League members and supporters.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

1107 9th Street, Suite 300 • Sacramento, CA 95814-3608 • 916 442.7215 • www.lwvc.org

For the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, we are working with local Leagues across California to educate the public about health care and Covered California.

2013 was also a big year for our work on the environment. We successfully convinced lawmakers to include the most significant disclosure requirements in the country for fracking. Our members also fought off an attempt to weaken the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)—California’s premier environmental protection law.

This year alone, 26 of the bills we supported made it to the Governor’s desk and 19 of those—from gun safety to reproductive choice to voting rights—were signed and will be California law.

Information Is Power—So We’re POWERING UP the Electorate!

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund continues to provide the highest quality information to voters through local, regional, state, and even national collaborative projects. In addition, key state resources like our *Pros and Cons*, Smart Voter, and the Easy Voter Guide Project brought clarity and accessibility to the often daunting task of voting in California elections. Our voter service work continues to grow and in 2014, we will leverage that success and expertise to launch an **exciting new 2-year project to re-envision California’s Official Voter Information Guide**.

Funded by The James Irvine Foundation, we will help state and county election officials better meet the needs of California’s diverse voters. This project will tackle key challenges, including improving accuracy, reducing bias, eliminating confusing and complicated technical language, and overcoming technology barriers. We’re committed to making easy to understand voter information accessible in print, online, and via mobile devices through official government channels, ensuring all Californians have what they need to participate fully in our democracy.

This November we published the 15th edition of the ***Guide to California Government***—an easy to read, graphic-rich user’s manual. We educate and engage readers by stressing their role in government.

This newest version has concise up-to-date chapters on voting and logistics, the initiative system, levels of government, the state budget, and the education system. Designed as a resource for new voters, students, and election experts, the book supports Californians in everything from voting to putting a statewide initiative on the ballot. Already lauded for its nonpartisan content and clear explanations of complex systems, the *Guide to California Government* has also received applause for expanded info-graphics and icons that support easier navigation by readers.

Heather Smith, President of Rock the Vote, says:

“*The Guide to California Government* is a thorough, non-partisan, easy-to-read road map for navigating the often complicated process for voting and engaging with our government. We look forward to using this amazing resource in Rock the Vote’s work engaging California’s citizens.”

Miles Jason Nevin, Executive Director of the California State Student Association, wrote:

“As someone who registers and mobilizes thousands of college students to engage at the polls, I look forward to utilizing the *Guide to California Government* in order to best educate college-age voters.”

This book needs to reach a broad audience. Working with local Leagues and community partners, we’re working to make it available in every high school, college, and public library in California. We are also beginning to work on new content to support educators using the Guide in the classroom.

Creating Superheroes: Defenders of Democracy

“We are a training ground for democracy.”

Being a product of the League’s nonpartisan education is an amazing thing. Time in League prepares our members and supports them so that they’re ready to do great work in their communities. In California, our leaders influence elected officials, organize voters, advise government agencies, sit on commissions, and serve in public office.

To better support their important work, we’re investing more deeply in our training and mentoring programs. This year, we’re rolling out new training on legislative advocacy and revamping our legislative handbook to better support grassroots activists.

Next year, we’ll finalize our new Training Tool Kit for state and local leaders. With current high-quality training materials for advocacy and voter service, this initiative will improve our ability to recruit and train new leaders and also provide a place where local leaders can share information on innovative projects that are being piloted in local communities.

We can’t do this alone! Your contribution helps us educate, train, and empower more Californians to be effective advocates for our democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer A. Waggoner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Jennifer Waggoner
President, LWVC

P.S. The new 15th edition of the *Guide to California Government* is now available. With more than 200 pages of great information and illuminating graphics, the Guide is a must-have for wonks, activists, and students—and a great resource for all Californians. It can be ordered on Amazon, you can request it at your local bookstore, or both!