

Monthly Meetings are Back on Zoom

JULY MONTHLY MEETING **MONDAY, JULY 6 11:45 am**



Speaker: Benita McLarin, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services

Lessons from Covid-19 for Integration of Healthcare in Marin

Benita McLarin became Director of the Department of Health and Human Services for Marin County in the fall of 2019. Previously, she was Chief Operating Officer for Santa Clara Valley Medical Center for over five years and held senior positions in health care systems in Alameda, Sonoma and Solano counties. She served over 20 years active duty as a Medical Service Corps Officer with the US Army, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel and combat veteran.

Ms. McLarin holds a masters degree in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health and a masters in health administration from Chapman University.

She enjoys mentoring and encouraging young people and early careerists, and is a board member and mentor with the Bay-Area iMentor program.

Watch your email for a Zoom invitation to these meetings. Your invitation will arrive a day or two before the event

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING **MONDAY, AUGUST 3 11:30 am**



Speaker: Daniel A. Smith, Professor and Chair of Political Science at the University of Florida

Celebrate 100 Years Strong! Challenges Then and Now

This month the LWV Marin recognizes women's suffrage, achieved in the U.S. on August 18, 1920. Despite the advances over the years in voting rights, our country today faces distinct and nefarious efforts to deny the right to vote.

While California leads the way in voter protections and democratic reforms (think the LWV's initiative to end gerrymandering), many states in the country are immersed in voting-rights battles.

Dr. Smith will cover the challenges facing women's suffrage 100 years later plus the current threats facing our democracy.

Dr. Smith is the President of ElectionSmith, Inc. and an expert witness in numerous voting-rights lawsuits across the country. His research broadly examines how political institutions affect political behavior across and within the American states, and he is the author of *Tax Crusaders and the Politics of Direct Democracy* (1998), *Educated by Initiative* (2004), and *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform* (2015).

See p. 2 for more info. on Dr. Smith

With Regret!

Annual Gala Dinner
Has Been Canceled

We'll Return in 2021

MARINLWV.ORG

The LWVMC website is an important resource and tool, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. A robust and updated website helps us do our important work of empowering voters and defending democracy. We are working to make our website welcoming, engaging and useful for the public as well as our members.

Please visit our website, marinlww.org, and take a look around! This issue of the Voter will be posted under the "For Members" tab along with other relevant member information.

Your feedback is always welcome. Send an email to webmaster@marinlww.org



Introducing the League's new Bookkeeper, Heather Roberson

Heather Roberson assumed the position of the League's Bookkeeper this year in June 2020. She brings to the League her skills from being a small-business owner for two decades and is also QuickBooks Online Certified. We were lucky to have Jessica Williams, our outgoing bookkeeper, work with her for a month to show her the ropes.

In addition to her financial background, Heather is passionate about photography, displaying her scenic photos not only on her website (<https://www.heatherrobersonphotography.com>) but also in local galleries and art festivals. Heather is also an avid traveler (heels cooling at the moment), which allows her passion for photography to flourish.

If you have questions for her or would like to welcome her to the group, she can be reached at Bookkeeper@MarinLWV.org.

From p.1

More about Dr. Smith

Daniel A. Smith is Professor and Chair of Political Science at the University of Florida. He is the President of ElectionSmith, Inc., and a former Senior Fulbright Scholar in Ghana, West Africa. He has served as an expert witness in numerous voting rights lawsuits in Florida and across the country, working closely with the ACLU, the NAACP, Demos, the Campaign Legal Center, Mi Familia, SEIU, and numerous other voting rights groups. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and earned his undergraduate degree from Penn State. Dr. Smith's research broadly examines how political institutions affect political behavior across and within the American states. In addition to publishing over 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, Dr. Smith authored books that include *Tax Crusaders* and *the Politics of Direct Democracy* (Routledge, 1998), *Educated by Initiative* (University of Michigan Press, 2004), and *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform* (4th edition, Cengage, 2015). He is widely quoted in the Florida and national media.



**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

Standing in Solidarity with the Black Community

June 3, 2020

Virginia Kase, Chief Executive Officer, LWVUS

This week, people from all over this country have exercised their First Amendment rights as they protested the killing of George Floyd and the countless other Black lives that have been taken at the hands of police. We have seen peaceful demonstrators take to the streets demanding change. We have seen people of every race, religion, and ethnic background stand and kneel in solidarity with the Black community with the same message—**Black Lives Matter**.

We’ve also seen civil unrest in some places and, sadly, acts of police violence against protestors. We must not let those images derail the fight against systemic racial injustice and inequality. Speaking out is an important first step, but this moment requires

more than words—it requires us to change. We must do the work of introspection and make real, lasting change within our organization.

As a democracy and voting rights organization, we must be part of the progress that is catalyzed at this moment. In the coming weeks and months, we will be supporting our partners in the civil rights community who are working on legislation and policy reforms focused on creating systemic change in our government institutions, starting with unjust policing. We have been invited to do this work, but we must remember that we come to the table as allies. We will listen to civil rights leaders spearheading this effort, and we will use our power, our talents, and our collective voices to support and amplify their work.

Now, more than ever, it’s clear that our work to inform voters and hold government accountable on the local and state levels is where real potential for change lies. As we saw yesterday, throughout the month of June states are still holding important primaries, delayed due to COVID-19. Voters need to know where candidates stand on the issues, how their votes will directly impact their communities in the immediate and the long term.

We must also remain dedicated to our advocacy work that is focused on dismantling racism within our electoral system: *People Powered Fair Maps*, voting rights restoration for formerly incarcerated people, combating unfair voter purging, and fighting voter ID laws and polling place closures.

We have embarked on this journey, and we will not and cannot turn back.

OFFICE MEMO

- ➡ Our office continues to be closed due to COVID19 safety concerns.
- ➡ We welcome our new bookkeeper, Heather, who started mid-June.
- ➡ Our Office Management Crew is checking email and phone messages and handling the mail.

TRANSPORTATION/LAND USE/HOUSING

(The April and May TLUH meetings were cancelled for lack of subject matter. These notes are from our **June 9** meeting on Zoom.)

The San Rafael City Council Vote on Planned Development Areas (PDAs)

We learned that the PDA concept was created some years ago to give local communities a voice in the planning process to create new development in their jurisdictions. It has been dormant in recent years but is now making a comeback in San Rafael. The City Council will meet on June 15 to vote to approve PDAs in (1) an expanded area surrounding the Canal east of 101, and (2) the North San Rafael town center--the Northgate Mall area that encompasses a ½-mile circle.

Ethan Guy, a housing specialist and the Principal Analyst in San Rafael's Community Development Dept., joined us to explain the role of PDAs in general and answer our questions. He said that a major feature of the PDA concept was that this community process is being funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Assn. of Bay Area Governments.

After the TLUH committee voted to support the two PDAs, Linda Jackson agreed to submit a letter to the Board asking for its approval to forward it to the SR City Council. The Board approved. (On June 15 the SR City Council unanimously approved the two PDAs!)

LWV New Mexico Request

The discussion to support the LWV New Mexico's request for the LWVMC to support its request to the LWVUS convention to adopt for concurrence LWVNM's position on the Transfer of Public Federal Lands was very brief. Since our Board had already approved it, all we had to do was support it in writing as well to inform LWVNM that the relevant LWVMC committees had supported its request.

San Rafael Transit Center

Kevin Hagerty reported that the Golden Gate Transit District's location choices for the new San Rafael Transit Center have been narrowed to three sites within several blocks of the current site.



The COVID-19 virus has caused delays in the ability of the Transit District to hold the next Public Hearing on the proposed locations of the Transit Center. The District is hoping to schedule that meeting in the Fall.

Committee members were concerned that the issue of sea-rise level at proposed transit center sites is one of the environment issues that will need to be addressed. Also, the virus has negatively impacted the collection of bridge tolls, which is a major source of revenue for the projected \$40 million funding for the transit station.



John Eells provided an update on the status of SMART.

The future of additional Federal funding is unknown. The SMART Board is developing a budget that is scheduled to be approved for the 2020/21 year in June. The Budget is likely to include major cutbacks in service and will need to be closely monitored and amended as SMART goes through the next fiscal year. The Joint Marin/Sonoma LWV SMART Subcommittee is hoping to be able to meet with SMART Board President Eric Lucan in the next month to share its ideas on how SMART's financial situation is precarious, largely because of the negative impacts of the COVID-19 virus and the failure to pass Measure I. The bailout funding from the Federal Government ends later this year, and the SMART must improve its actions on transparency, communication, and cooperation matters.

Judy Binsacca, T/LU/H

**your VOTE
is your VOICE**

**FROM THE VOTER
SERVICE TEAMS...**

General Voting and Election
Information

Voter Service Chair, Robin Diederich

Safe & Accessible Voting during the Pandemic

While Marin County, like the rest of the state, is easing health restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of COVID19, the threat of the virus remains. State and county election officials are working diligently to balance COVID19 safety concerns and voting access for the November 3 Presidential Election.

LWVC has been active in advocating for a fair and safe election amidst some political and partisan tussling between the Governor and Legislature. AB860 (Vote By Mail to all active registered voters) was recently signed, and SB423 (in-person voting procedures) is expected to be passed/signed in July. State and local election officials (CA Election Task Force) continue to work out the most appropriate procedures. The current plan includes:

Vote By Mail (VBM)

- ◆ VBM ballots will be mailed to all active registered voters
- ◆ VBM ballot tracking will be available (mailed, received & counted); sign up at WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov
- ◆ More secure drop off boxes/locations will be provided

In-Person Voting

- ◆ Polling stations - assigned, consolidated, COVID19 safety procedures to protect voters and poll workers (masks, physical distancing, sanitizers, etc.)
- ◆ Poll worker recruitment - most poll workers are 65 years + and are a high COVID19 risk

- ◆ 3 days of Early Voting prior to Election Day (Oct 31 - Nov 2) at polling stations
- ◆ Extensive voter outreach by state, county, LWV, community groups

Our family, friends and community members look to us, League members, for accurate voting & election information. Be a Voting Ambassador - stay educated, send people to marinlww.org, marinvotes.org, vote.ca.gov, votersedge.org and promote voting as a way to make your voice count.

Voter Service members will continue to communicate about the November 3 Presidential Election on MarinLWV.org, League emails, and our Facebook page.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE - help us prepare voters for this historic election!

Send an email to voterservice@marinlww.org

Voter Registration Team
Leader, Jackie Dagg

High School Elections Ambassador Program

The County of Marin Elections Department and the Marin County Office of Education have just announced the High School Elections Ambassador Program. The League of Women Voters is proud to partner in this effort.

This program has three main objectives:

- To pre-register sixteen and seventeen-year-old students and to register high school students who are eligible to vote;
- To expand the poll worker program to reach more students and increase participation; and
- To highlight the importance of youth engagement and participation in local, state and federal elections.

The Elections Department is now recruiting students for this program. The application is available on marinvotes.org. Applications are due by September 11, 2020. Continued on P. 6

The Voter Registration Team is working to re-engage with community partners to promote voter registration.

We will be partnering with Community Action Marin which has organized a July 4 caravan in support of racial and economic justice, voter registration and the 2020 census. League volunteers will be onsite to register voters. Participants will gather at 10am at the Northgate Mall parking lot across from the old Sears building. The caravan will start at 10:45am, and the event will end at 12pm. Covid-19 procedures will be in effect for all participants. For further information; camarin.org/July-4th-calls-for-strong-democracy/.

The League provided information on voter registration for the virtual Juneteenth Community Festival held on June 27, 2020.



Pros & Cons Team
Leader: Lynn Dooley

First Meeting: August 21– Zoom at 10am.
Research and present non-partisan pros and cons of local and state measures/
propositions for specific elections. [Read More Here.](#)
Our team for the Nov. 3 General Election is forming. Please join us.



Candidate Forums Team
Leader: Nancy Bell

When the May/June edition of The Voter was published, it was unclear as to what this fall might look like in regards to the opening up of the County to public gatherings. We can now confirm that all candidate forums for the November election, which will be held mid-September to mid-October, will be virtual through the wonders of ZOOM.

How many candidate forums do we anticipate? Candidate filing dates are July 13 through August 7, with a possible extension to August 12 for races where no incumbents file. Since we do not run candidate forums for uncontested races, mid-August is our target to have a better handle on the potential number of contested races. Coupled with requests to conduct several multi-race forums that are topic-focused, we know we will have a busy schedule!

Between now and mid-August we will:

- Continue to analyze local races to prioritize the hot races and issues around those races
- Set our own best practices for running virtual forums with the assistance and input from the state League
- Schedule several virtual training sessions to prepare forum volunteers for the scope of their new duties

We are all looking for ways to stay involved and feel purpose in our lives. If you are interested in participating in the November 2020 candidate forum activities and/or training, please contact Nancy Bell at forums@marinlww.org. Final decisions are still pending. Please remember to check our website at www.marinlww.org for updates.



League of Women Voters of Marin County
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Officers:

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Kira Rossetto Skomer
Barbara Strong
Cindy Wagner

C A L E N D A R

Our next membership meeting:

**July 6, 11:45am on Zoom - Speaker: Benita McLarin,
Director, Department of Health and Human Services**

**You will receive a Zoom invitation closer to the
meeting date.**

Committees are also meeting on Zoom:

**Watch your email for committee meeting details or
check the League website Marinlww.org**