



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VENTURA COUNTY

VOTER

July/August, 2015 Volume 58 No.1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members and Friends of LWVVC:

The Fourth of July always makes me think about all of the things we have to be thankful for. Besides being “the land of the free and the brave” we are fortunate to have a government that allows and needs our participation. We can vote and make a difference and we can speak our minds and dissent when we think our government is not acting in our best interests. And, we can advocate for change when we feel it is needed. When I think of the 4th of July I can't help but think about how perfectly the Leagues' mission fits the needs of our country. It encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

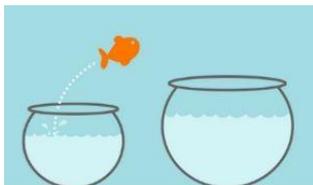
Attending the LWVC Convention this past May really brought home to me how important our work is. We heard from other Leagues around the state and attended caucuses about Climate Change, Public Higher Education, California Immigrants and Access to Healthcare, Raising Minimum Wage/Living Wage, Death with Dignity, and Making Democracy Work for More Voters, among many other topics. The League's work is making a difference. For example, on June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court made two important rulings that the League had advocated for and that are going to improve American's lives. First, the Court upheld access to health care subsidies in federally operated health care exchanges provided by the Affordable Care Act and second, the Court ruled that Arizona voters had the right to set up an independent redistricting commission (as opposed to gerrymandering).

Be sure to keep an eye out and join us for our September Membership Meeting so that you can learn more about what the League is doing - once a date and venue have been selected we will let you know and of course, you can always check the Calendar on our [website](#), until then...

Yours in League,
Pat Essick - President

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PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW MAILING ADDRESS !
LWVVC, PO Box 6786, Ventura, CA 93006

LWVVC Holds Annual Meeting

• whew would be appropriate •

Report on Our 2015 Annual Meeting

Co-president Barbara Doyle called the meeting to order, established that there was a quorum in attendance, and got the meeting off and running.

Co-president Pat Essick graciously welcomed members and guests to the meeting, the agenda was adopted, Judy Murphy and Pam Pecarich were appointed to take the minutes, and Pat Murray and Carol Lindberg were appointed to the Election Committee - the pace was set.

Business Matters. Members were informed about key issues and asked to be prepared to vote upon each.

Budget. Committee Chairman Bob Braitman went through the proposed 2015-2016 budget and thanked members of his committee. In a nutshell:

- General Fund appropriation budget of \$11,400 is roughly \$200 more than last year
- Expenses are recommended at \$13,120 which will draw on reserves
- Education Fund appropriations are the same as last year at \$650 plus a scholarship reserve of \$1,850. These amounts include a recommended dues increase of individual dues from \$60 to \$70 and household dues from \$90 to \$105.



Barbara Doyle Gets Things Going

Board of Directors:

President:

Patricia Essick

Vice President:

Barbara Doyle

Secretary:

Judith Murphy

Treasurer:

Pamela Pecarich

Directors at Large:

Pat Butler
Suzanne Harvey
Helen LaMonte
Steve Lattimore
Carol Lindberg
Jennifer Matos
Pat Murray

The Nominating Committee report was made by Cheryl Collart who, after thanking her committee, introduced the proposed slate of officers:

- President - Pat Essick
- Vice President – Barbara Doyle
- Secretary – Judy Murphy
- Treasurer – Pam Pecarich

Cheryl explained a new approach to the Director positions, one of asking members to serve at-large and to be prepared to assist in the various functions of the League instead of “owning” a particular role. Proposed slate of Directors-at-Large for the Board includes Suzanne Harvey, Helen LaMonte, Steve Lattimore, Carol Lindberg, Jennifer Matos and Pat Murray. Another proposed director withdrew her name and Pat Butler was nominated from the floor.

Amendments to Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation: Pam Pecarich took everyone through the proposed Amendments to Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, introduced and thanked our MTA Tom Carson for his assistance; wearing her Treasurer’s hat she reported on the balance in our General Fund account. A final end of the fiscal year financial report can be found at the end of this issue of the VOTER.

- Bylaw recommended revisions include:

- Allowing one or two year terms, except the Nominating Committee, to arrive at staggered terms so only part of the Board is being nominated in any given year
- Allow a future Board to apply to IRS to change our status from 501(c)(4) to tax exempt 501 (c)(3)

- Articles of Incorporation revisions include:

- Proposition I: Correction of Articles of Incorporation by which in 1980 the state misclassified the LWVVC as a Mutual Benefit Association, meaning we exist for our members - we should be a Public Benefit Corporation. A reclassification will irrevocably dedicate our organization’s assets to social welfare purposes

- Proposition II: Adds our purpose as being “charitable and educational” and reflects dissolution and distribution of assets under 501c(3) in the tax code. This would become effective only if the Secretary of State accepts Proposition I and if a future LWVVC Board approves filing for an application of 501c(3) status with the IRS

Actions. The above business matters were discussed and then voted upon with the results as follows:

- Dues Increase and Budget: both approved unanimously
- Nominations: approved unanimously
- Bylaw revisions: both approved unanimously
- Articles of Incorporation revisions: Propositions I and II were voted on by written ballot and approved unanimously

Committee Reports

Voter Service. Barbara Doyle reported on Voter Service. She noted that LWVVC had been very active and outlined the year’s various efforts including:

- A team (Pat Murray, Jeri Andrews, Melanie Ashen) in Thousand Oaks sent birthday cards to graduating seniors with instructions on how to register to vote
- Another team (Carmen Hurd, Pat McCart-Malloy, Frances Gagola, Kay Giles and Melanie Ashen) registered high school seniors in Oxnard and Port Hueneme high schools
- And yet another team (Kay Giles, Carol Lindberg, Cheryl Collart, and Barbara Doyle) trained CSUCI college students on how to do registrations and registered students on the CSUCI campus
- LWVVC has run the Marina Park polling place for years. This past year Cheryl Collart was the 2014 Inspector working with several other League members. We hope to expand our efforts in 2016
- LWVVC put on fall voter forums in Santa Paula, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Simi Valley, Port Hueneme, Ojai (2), the Congressional Brownley-Gorell forum, and the Thousand Oaks City Council special election forum in June. All were accomplished at no expense to the League.

Membership. Pat Essick reported on Membership and welcomed those new members who were there.



Business Over Members Enjoy Chance to Catch Up

Program. In addition to reporting on various “League” meetings put on during the year (of which there were many), Steve Lattimore, Program Chair, also outlined our public programs including:

- Post Water Bond, What’s Next?
- Local Face of Human Trafficking

Steve then laid out the 2015-16 plans for meetings on transportation and infrastructure, as well as study meetings on higher education.

Report from LWVUS Board Member

Chris Carson from the LWVUS Board then addressed the meeting and explained how the League is on the cutting edge with

its Constitutional Amendment Process Study and noted that members should be urged to READ the background papers on LWVUS’ website and use common sense to answer the consensus questions when the time comes (links can be found at the end of the VOTER). She also noted that Money in Politics study guide and materials should be available in the fall.

Report on LWV California Convention

Next, members from LWVVC who attended California’s Annual Convention in San Diego reported on what was very clearly an extremely interesting meeting - see article below for a report on their experience.

The business portion of the meeting wrapped up with words of thanks from Pat Essick to everyone who participated and each of our Board members for their contributions to LWVVC. Pam Pecarich presented Pat and Barbara with gifts from the Board in appreciation for their hard work as co-presidents over the past year.

Melanie Ashen then introduced the members of the LWVVC Scholarship Committee and our first ever League of Women Voters of Ventura County Scholarship Fund awardee Megan Bograd. Megan was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship and a one year League membership - “meet” Megan in the following article.

The meeting adjourned and members sat down to lunch and Dr. Richard Rush’s speech.

LWVVC Scholarship Fund Awards 1st Scholarship

• native venturan awarded scholarship •

Meet Megan Bograd

At the Ventura College Foundation Annual Scholarship Gala in May, LWVVC member Frances Gagola and I were pleased to participate in awarding Megan Bograd with this year’s LWVVC scholarship. And so, it is with great pleasure that I would like to introduce Megan Bograd, the very first scholarship recipient of our newly formed League of Women Voters of Ventura County Scholarship Fund.

Megan is a homegrown Venturan having been born and raised here. At 18 she is the second oldest of her siblings. She has a 19 year old brother who also attends college and 3 other siblings the youngest of which is 13. I am sure her parents are appreciative and very proud of her earning scholarships both for what it symbolizes but also because it is quite possible that they could end up with all five of their children in college at the same time.



Frances Gagola (L) and Pat Essick (R) Present Megan Bograd with First Ever LWVVC Scholarship

Megan attended and graduated from Buena High School where she was very involved in band, all kinds of band, from the Marching Band, the Drum Line, and the Jazz Band, all the way to playing in a wind ensemble. Her involvement with music has opened many opportunities to volunteer and serve her community. For example, she has volunteered as a coach for the marching bands of both Moorpark High School and Simi High School. These days her former high school band teacher has tapped her to help mentor the Balboa Middle School Percussion Club.

Having attended Ventura Community College for two years Megan is now transferring to San Francisco State University where she plans on majoring in Sociology. She also hopes to do related research. Ultimately it is her plan to attend UC Berkeley for her masters and ultimately doctorate degrees.

In a letter she wrote to thank the League for her scholarship she stated, “I am honored to be the recipient of the League of Women Voters of Ventura County Scholarship. I am truly thankful that this scholarship will not only benefit my college education, but allow my family to save money to further my siblings’ education. This past year has been riddled with financial stress and it is freeing to know that my future is secure.”

It is our pleasure and we wish her every success.

Submitted by Pat Essick, President

To make a tax deductible contribution to our scholarship fund make checks payable to “LWVVC Education Fund” with a note that contribution is for the scholarship. Mail donations to: LWVVC, PO Box 6786, Ventura, CA 93006. Thank you.

Local Perspective on Public Higher Education

• lwvvc annual meeting speaker provides insight •

Dr. Richard Rush, President of CSUCI, Addresses Group

Following the business portion of the LWVVC Annual Meeting we were privileged to have Dr. Rush, President of California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) speak to us about challenges and opportunities for public higher education in Ventura County. Likening his job to that of a musical conductor, Dr. Rush has been maestro of CSUCI since its inception in 1999. Following are a few of his observations.



CHALLENGES

CSUCI is the only state university in the California system that is required to self-fund entirely. As such, the University is empowered to use and develop its site as it sees fit. The University's growth is a direct result of public and private partnerships and custom tailored interdisciplinary programs. The University's link to our community runs deep.

REDUCED APPROPRIATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the greatest challenges currently facing the school has been the scant funding coming from the state, and while enrollment has grown substantially since 2001, state funding has not kept pace. Between 2008 and 2011 a half billion dollars were cut from the school's appropriation. The number of students trying to get in during that same time period increased dramatically. To further complicate attempts to grow and meet student needs, the State capped tuition which limited the number of students the university could accept. Dr. Rush predicted that the downstream effect of these reductions will be a slowing in our local economy.



Dr. Rush Offers Listeners an Insider's View of Public Higher Education in Ventura County

In an effort to compensate for these fiscal stresses, CSUCI has worked hard to save \$70 million dollars by consolidating campus services and working with community partners for donations. Through their extraordinary efforts, and in spite of declining State funding, they have actually been able to *grow* their student population to over 6,000 students in 2015.

SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY ALIGNMENT

Dr. Rush emphasized that students need to come to college already educated in the basics and noted that a large percentage of incoming students are insufficiently prepared to take full advantage of a college education.

For example, he pointed out that in mathematics 71% of all students on average arrive prepared compared to 40% of entering Hispanic students. Not surprisingly, in English, 68% of students overall arrive prepared whereas among Hispanic students, 48% are prepared. As a whole, CSUCI students arrive less prepared

than average state college students. However, CSUCI is successfully graduating students at *the same rate as other state colleges* with a similar demographic including among those students who begin their college experience at an academic deficit. Dr. Rush expressed his strongly held belief that we need to begin supporting academics *at least as much* as we support athletics. He also spoke of the need to work with high schools and community colleges to better prepare students. The University will also require more testing at entry.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Dr. Rush shared his frustrations with published ranking and rating systems noting his view that they are biased towards private elite east coast colleges. He believes this bias does a disservice to most colleges by adversely affecting the careers of graduates. He highlighted rankings published by the Washington Monthly which, in his opinion, does a much better job comparing colleges partly because it compares outcomes. CSUCI was recently mentioned by them as an exemplary college due to its good graduation outcomes and relatively low cost, among other factors.

CALIFORNIA'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE

California has 15,000,000 Hispanics whose educational success already does and will continue to drive its economy. 45% of CSUCI's students are Hispanic. In Ventura County, 57% of K-12 students are Hispanic. Our challenge as a county is to commit to engaging Hispanic students at a higher level. Currently only 28% of Hispanic students are eligible to apply at CSUCI.

Speaking about the community's needs for graduates Dr. Rush described a 2011 plan to create a School of Engineering to meet the needs of the Navy base and over 300 other existing local businesses. So far this plan has stalled due to lack of funding however negotiations to get the project off the ground are underway with the governor and state legislature. Dr. Rush pointed to the school's nursing program as a model program – CUSCI worked closely with County hospitals to anticipate and meet their nursing needs. Local hospitals helped in the creation and funding of the highly successful program.

Dr. Rush's presentation was followed by a period of Q&A.

LWV California Holds Annual Convention

• there was much to think about on the trip home •

Report on LWV California Convention

LWVVC had terrific representation at this year's LWVC's Annual Convention this past May in San Diego. Following is a brief report on what they saw and learned.

Helen LaMonte attended a workshop on Voter Service which focused attendees on the changing racial demographics of California and set as a goal for voters to resemble the population as a whole. Participants were encouraged to form community partnerships to register voters, especially the young and new citizens.

Steve Lattimore summarized the business of the convention - bylaw changes to change from an annual to a biennial budget, and making the biennial council meetings optional. The state league's budget was approved as recommended with a per-member-payment increase of \$2.50 in 2015-16 and another \$2.50 in 2016-17.

LWVC's recommended program is to retain all current positions, update the agricultural position with a simple wording change, and adopt no new positions. Issues for advocacy include voting rights and money in politics - 2nd tier advocacy issues are protecting the environment and minimum/living wage.

Some of the most interesting debate was around non-recommended items brought to the convention by local leagues. The first of these, put forth by the LWV of San Diego, was death with dignity. While hotly debated it failed to receive the required 60% vote with the prevailing view that other groups are better positioned to work on this issue.

Judy Murphy reported on the second non-recommended item which was ‘making democracy work for more voters in California.’ The caucus’ position was that there are other voting systems that result in more women attaining public office, provide a better solution to voting rights cases and reduce the amount of negative ads.

Pat Essick attended League 101 and the Public Higher Education Study Caucus.

LWVVC Education Committee Gets To It

- committee holds its first 2 meetings •

LWVVC Public Higher Education Study Committee Update

The Public Higher Education Study Committee has met twice so far. At our first meeting in May, members of the Committee chose Beth Cohen to act as Chairperson and went over the timeline and suggested reading for the study. The Committee met again in June at which time members provided the group with summaries of what they had read. The Committee has tentatively decided to put on a public forum in February 2016. Sometime in September 2015, LWVC will send out final information that we are to distribute. LWVC wants our study's findings/consensus findings by April 2016.

Among the many things the Committee has learned so far is that the state of California is not funding schools like they did in the 1960's and 1970's as part of the 1960 Education Master Plan. The Master Plan was intended to provide access to affordable higher education for all that wanted it. It has become clear that we need a new master plan that reflects both the very different makeup of our population and its economic position and takes into consideration the need by business for future workers. At this point it is clear that we are not even coming close to meeting the educational needs predicted for either the immediate or more distant future.

If interested in attending one of the Committee's meetings, see Calendar below for schedule.

Submitted by Beth Cohen, Ed Committee Chair

California Considers "Vote by Mail"

- legislation designed to increase voter participation •

Senate Bill 450 Wending its Way Through State Legislature

Voter education and engaging voters in the election process has been a consistent focus of the LWVVC and is also a topic that has been taken up locally by Ventura's Charter Review Committee (see piece below).

At the state level efforts are underway to address voter engagement and lack of voter turnout most recently in the form of SB 450. Co-authored by Senators Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica) and Bob Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys) SB 450 would, if passed, enable the following more relevant (to the times) approach to modern voting:

-  Allow counties to implement new election models that include mailing every voter a ballot
-  Permit voters to mail their ballots or drop them off at any vote center or secure 24 hour ballot drop off box within their county of residence
-  Expand early voting by keeping vote centers open a minimum of eight hours per day for 10 days prior to Election Day

So far the states of Oregon, Washington and Colorado are the only states that now conduct all elections by mail, they are also among those with the highest voter turnout: Colorado (53%), Oregon (51%) and Washington (41%). The United States Election Project [reports](#) on turnout rates by state, here are some interesting facts from its most recent (2014) report: Maine (58%) and Wisconsin (56%) have the highest turnout rates whereas California (30%), and Texas and New York (both 28%) are among the lowest.

Based on interest to increase participation by local cities like Ventura and at the state level in the form of SB 450, it is timely to have more discussion about what process voters should be afforded when voting.

Submitted by Cheryl Collart, Ventura

Update on Charter Review Committee

• monthly meetings yielding results •

Ventura City Charter Review Committee Up-date

As reported in the VOTER earlier this year, since its initial meeting in November 2014, the Ventura City Council's appointed Charter Review Committee (CRC) has been holding monthly meetings to discuss and develop recommendations for action by the City Council related to reviewing the city's charter including possible changes. Any changes to the charter would require a vote by the public.

The CRC is specifically tasked with researching five areas of the charter:

- Direct election of the Mayor
- Term limits
- Removing Board of Education from City Charter
- Council Member Compensation
- Consideration of election process (districts, at large, options)

In April, the City Council clarified the work of the CRC to focus on policy issues and added the following:

- Making the charter gender neutral
- Truing up the terms of mayor and deputy mayor to coincide with even year elections
- Evaluating the title 'deputy mayor' as appropriate to the office
- Reviewing residency requirements for members of the city council and the city manager

Consideration of the election process including the formation of council districts was the focus of the most recent CRC meeting held in June. This has been considered one of the most important areas of review in light of the California Voting Rights Act, and has the potential to significantly change local city elections.

The CRC study plan allows the CRC to hold discussions on all designated topics through this month. The CRC will then revisit topics in the coming months in order to refine recommendations for proposed changes to the charter. A final report is expected to be presented to the City Council by the end of the year.

Monthly meetings are open to the public and are held at 4 pm at Ventura City Hall the second Wednesday of every month. All agendas, meeting minutes and related documents are available through the city's [website](#).

LWVVC member Cheryl Collart serves on the CRC. If you have questions or comments please contact her directly at 805-644-2923 or via [email](#).

Submitted by Cheryl Collart, Ventura

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New Members

We are especially happy to have these members dispersed around the county.

- Donna Schwartz - Camarillo
- Karen Savitt - Ventura

In Memoriam:

Laurie Rozet – Ventura

Long time LWVVC member Laurie Rozet passed away after a gallant fight against pneumonia. Among her many talents Laurie was actively engaged in what was happening both locally here in Ventura County and globally. She traveled all over the world and had experiences most of us can only imagine from participating in wedding ceremonies of the head hunters in Papua New Guinea to being the last American evacuated from Honduras during their civil war, to traveling across the Sahara on camel back. She also had deep philanthropic interests including such projects as pioneering after school daycare programs, building wells in the Sudan, and supporting good causes both social and cultural in Ventura. She partnered with another long time League member, Ida Bucher, to start the Head Start program in West Los Angeles prior to moving to Ventura County in the 1980's. Demonstrating her wide range of interests she also loved attending League meetings whenever possible.

Judy Vielbig - Ventura

Judy was born and grew up in a farming family outside of Lincoln Nebraska. In 1957, together with a group of other Midwesterners, she moved to California as a brand new school teacher - their students referred to them as "The Covered Wagon Gang." She met her future husband Les in Anaheim and they were married in July 1960. Judy and Les traveled all over the world from the Holy Land and Africa to Germany and other European countries. A long time member of the League Judy had a strong commitment to our local community and worked tirelessly for her church where, among other things, she was a member of the choir and taught Bible study classes. Her many community projects, and there were many, included active involvement in The Grand Dames, a women's support group for Rubicon, tutoring children at Project Understanding, and starting Compassionate Friends, a support group for parents who had lost a child. Judy also donated time and resources to many local organizations including Friends of the Library and the Ventura County Symphony to name two. She is survived by her husband Les and their children and grandchildren.

LWVVC BOARD DOINGS

All members are encouraged to attend monthly LWVVC Board meetings. See Calendar below for the when's and where's. Come and see what your Board is doing and learn about projects that are in the works.

Notes from May Board Meeting (The Board did not meet in June)

Topics Covered and "To Do" List:

- League members Frances Gagola and Pat Essick attended the Ventura College Foundation awards luncheon and watched as Megan Bograd become the first recipient of our new scholarship.
- Board discussed arrangements for the (then) upcoming LWVVC Annual Meeting in June.
- Pat Murray reported on the lively city council forum in Thousand Oaks - 4 candidates and about 150 guests participated.
- Barbara Doyle outlined a request from the Cabrillo Housing Corporation for us to run their election. She also outlined member interest in continuing LWVVC's high school voter registration project.
- Initial plans are being made for our upcoming, later in the Summer, In/Out Board Meeting.

Submitted by Judy Murphy, Secretary

VOLUNTEER A LITTLE TIME

- lwvvc needs you! •

If you have some time and are interested in volunteering a bit of it for the good of the League, following is a list of projects that could use your help. If interested in getting involved, send an email to info@lwvventuracounty.org and let us know, someone will contact you to follow-up.

Don't think that just because we don't have anything listed here right now means we don't need help, we do we're just taking a short breather for the summer.

Working on a project for the LWVVC and need some help? Send an email to sharvey@cal.berkeley.edu and tell us what you need- we'll include it in the next VOTER. Please include dates, location, time of day.

THINGS ARE HAPPENING!

- all league meetings are open to the public •

CALENDAR

2015

Friday, August 14 - In & Out Organizational Meeting for New Board - 10 am to Noon (followed by lunch). Location: Pat Essick's house, 2955 Hermitage Road, Ojai. **Please RSVP to Pat** at pessick@hotmail.com and she will send you a map (GPS and Mapquest sometimes a little iffy to this address). No need to bring anything but your good ideas and enthusiasm.

Sunday, August 30 – Ventura County Reproductive Rights Network’s “Write for Your Rights” event – 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Location: Unitarian Universalist Church, 5654 Ralston St., Ventura. Join us for a large-scale, letter writing event in support of access to reproductive health. This fun afternoon of activism is free and open to the public. Complimentary refreshments and door prizes. VCRRN will have letters on a range of reproductive health care topics prepared for you to sign. These letters will send a strong message from our community to our elected representatives.

Tuesday, September 8 - LWVVC Education Committee Meeting (all are welcome to attend) - 10:00 am to Noon. Location: The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf restaurant, 3301 E. Main St., Ventura. Click [here](#) if interested in suggested reading material from LWV California’s Higher Public Education Committee.

September 18 thru 27 - Planned Parenthood 41st Annual Book Sale - Week ends: 10:00 am to 8:00 pm except Sundays close at 6:00 pm. Weekdays: Noon to 8:00 pm. Location: Earl Warren Showgrounds, Santa Barbara. Admission is free except for reception on Friday, September 17th, \$25. For more [information](#)

CURRENT LEAGUE STUDIES

➤ LWVC study this term is *Public Higher Education: Access and Affordability*. Study materials will be available in August 2015, with consensus due by April 2016. Study materials available [here](#).

➤ LWVUS 2014-2016 program on Key Structures of Democracy includes two studies:

1. *U.S. Constitution*: Committee will study process by which the U.S. Constitution can be amended, including the constitutional convention method, and identifying

the gaps and challenges in those methods. Consensus due by December 1, 2015. Preview questions [here](#).

2. *Money in Politics*: Committee will conduct an update of League's position on campaign finance for the purpose of addressing the lack of member understanding and agreement as to whether financing a political campaign is protected speech under the First Amendment.

Information on LWVUS studies can be found [here](#).



