



# Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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## MEET THE JUDGE

*Featuring*

The Honorable Rebecca Connolly  
Superior Court Judge

*Improving Outcomes for Youth and Families*

*Saturday*

*September 21, 2019*

*10 a.m. - noon*

Capitola City Hall  
Council Chambers  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010

*Free and open to the public*



## Calendar

Tuesday, September 10, 2019  
10 a.m.-noon  
LWVSCC Board Meeting  
Santa Cruz County Bank  
75 River Street  
Santa Cruz, CA

Saturday, September 21, 2019  
10 a.m.-noon  
Meet Judge Rebecca Connolly  
Capitola City Hall  
Council Chambers  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010  
Free and open to the public

Tuesday, October 8, 2019  
10 a.m.-noon  
LWVSCC Board Meeting  
Santa Cruz County Bank  
75 River Street  
Santa Cruz, CA

Saturday, November 2, 2019  
10 a.m.-noon  
State of our Schools  
County Superintendent of Schools  
Faris Sabbah  
Capitola City Hall  
Community Room  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010  
Free and open to the public

In August, LWVUS launched the 100th Anniversary *She is Me* social media campaign with the tagline "Progress is in our DNA." Designed for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, this campaign features biographies and photos and offers opportunities for viewers to gain more information, to join, and to donate.

Superior Court Judge Rebecca Connolly, an elected county official, will talk about why she became a lawyer, how she became a judge, her experiences on the bench, and her role as presiding judge of juvenile court in the County from 2017-2019 on Saturday, September 21, 10 a.m. to noon in Capitola.

This event will offer an opportunity to meet Judge Connolly and hear about her important work implementing the Continuum of Care Reform, which strives to reduce group home placements for foster youth and provide alternatives to detention for youth involved in the criminal justice system with the goal of improving outcomes through engaging youth and families.

Connolly received a Juris Doctor degree from the University of California Davis School of Law in 1989, and began her legal career as a law clerk at the US District Court for the Central District of California. She then clerked for the Chief US Magistrate Judge for the US district Court in northern California. As a staff attorney for California Rural Legal Assistance, she represented impoverished fieldworkers. She has also been a partner in a local law firm and has served as an assistant district attorney for the county. She was elected to the bench in 2010.

This free event is open to the public and will take place at the Capitola City Hall Council Chambers, 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010 (metered parking is available in city hall parking lot next door). Light refreshments will be served.

## Voter Service Report

### Volunteers wanted!

National Voter Registration Day is a national holiday celebrating our democracy, and has been growing in popularity ever since its inception in 2012. Held on Tuesday, September 24, 2019, the focus will again be on making sure everyone has the opportunity to vote. On that day, volunteers from the League and other organizations will be registering voters at many locations throughout Santa Cruz County. We coordinate our efforts with the county clerk's office, making sure that all areas of the county are covered. If you are able to volunteer your time on Tuesday, September 24, please contact Sue Becker (suebecker108@sbcglobal.net) or Dottie Fry (fryfrydl@comcast.net). We will contact you to set up a time frame that suits your schedule.

— Sue Becker, Voter Service Chair



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## Membership Report

Did you renew? Dues are just \$65 for an individual membership. You have until September 30 to send your membership renewal to:

LWV Membership Renewal  
PO Box 1745  
Capitola, CA 95010

Or, [submit your payment by PayPal](#) at [lwvsc.org](#).

—Lydia Nogales Parker  
Membership Chair

## President's Message



I look forward to getting to know our members better and doing more outreach in our community during this very special year as we celebrate the centennial of the League of Women Voters. As you know, the League of Women Voters was founded by suffragists who fought for and achieved voting rights for women. For the past 100 years, the League has been highly effective in providing valuable information for voters and influencing public policy.

One of the areas of great concern for the League of Women Voters of California is criminal justice reform. Our [current position on criminal justice](#) was adopted by concurrence with unanimous support from the delegates at the state convention in June. On Saturday September 21, our local program, featuring Judge Rebecca Connolly, will give us a chance to meet informally, exchange ideas, and learn more about criminal justice in Santa Cruz County. I encourage all our members to come and join us at this year's opening program.

—Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

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## Meeting the Public Education Challenge

At the League's November meeting, newly-elected County Superintendent of Schools Faris Sabbah will discuss the status of public education in Santa Cruz County, including the impact of charter schools and his plans to confront the many challenges facing our education system. Running unopposed, Sabbah was elected in June, 2018 and sworn in in January, 2019; he replaced retired superintendent Michael Watkins.

The event will take place in Capitola on Saturday, November 2 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Capitola City Hall Community Room, 420 Capitola Avenue (metered parking is available in the city lots next door). For more information, call Stephanie Harlan at 475-7184 or email [league@lwvsc.org](mailto:league@lwvsc.org).

## Cabrillo College: Changes and Challenges

At the LWVSCC annual meeting in June, Cabrillo College president Matthew Wetstein spoke about his first year-and-a-half in charge. Founded in 1959, Cabrillo College, located in Aptos, serves as the county's public community college offering associate degrees and certificates in more than seventy fields of study.

Wetstein gave an overview of the student body. Cabrillo College serves about 17 thousand students a year, with about ten thousand full-time students; about 45 percent of Cabrillo's students are Hispanic. The largest feeder schools are from Watsonville, Harbor High, and Aptos High; about 70 percent of their graduating students enroll at Cabrillo. Students from Scotts Valley and the San Lorenzo Valley, which are further away, send 45 to 55 percent of their students to Cabrillo. "Most people don't realize how much of the student population that's coming out of high school is actually enrolling at Cabrillo first before they go on for a transfer degree at a four-year university, so we're quite proud of that data," Wetstein said.

Another point of pride for Wetstein is that Cabrillo students who transfer to the California State University and the University of California system outperform students who go directly to the universities in terms of grade point average.

Wetstein noted the "off-the-charts" community support; last year the Cabrillo Foundation gave four million dollars in contributions. Half went to support the school's operations and for student scholarships. The other half goes to support programs that faculty apply for to purchase equipment.

In 2019, Cabrillo had the largest graduating class ever in the history of the college by 25 percent, with 1476 students receiving associate's degrees. They also had a record number of transfer students accepted into University of California Santa Cruz, where the largest admitted class came out of Cabrillo.

Other notable accomplishments include opening a makerspace on campus with 3D printing technology for art and engineering. Wetstein called attention to a student who worked with a local

company to develop a process that uses discarded shrimp shells to make food packaging. The robotics engineering team made it to the national quarterfinals and lost on a tie-breaker in the NASA "Swarmathon". The Women's beach volleyball team became the first northern California team to win the state championship. The "Ethics Bowl" team beat Stanford University to finish seventh overall in the national championship of the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl.



*Cabrillo President Matt Wetstein addresses LWVSCC at annual meeting.*

This spring Cabrillo launched an ag-tech program designed to train students for careers in agriculture around the tech sector; students train to know how to operate software increasingly being used in the agricultural sector. Using funds from a federal grant, they built a new greenhouse for the ag-tech program for their sustainable agriculture degree program. Students finishing this program can go right into the workforce or transfer to a four-year school.



A key new initiative has introduced a change in how students are assessed for placement into math and English classes. Previously, placement depended solely on how they did on assessment tests, and often students would not do well on tests and were required to take remedial courses before being able to take college-level courses. Now using a “multiple methods” approach to placement, they can also look at the student’s high school grades in those courses; students entering Cabrillo can take college-level courses if they do well with either method. With this new method, they are admitting 75 percent of students directly into college-level English, up from 25 percent. They almost doubled the number of students who completed college-level English in one semester. In math, the number of students completing the courses went up, but the pass rate went down, partly, says Wetstein, due to not having enough math professional development going in, however they expect to get better at this going forward.

school class. The California State Universities were supposed to admit the top thirty percent and the University of California schools the top 10 percent.

Other changes at Cabrillo include a streamlined graduation process and an expansion of dual-enrollment classes for high school students.

The Cabrillo strategic plan for the next few years looks at the metrics for the college’s success: completion and transfer to four-year institutions; preparation for the labor market for good jobs that can sustain a family; offering relevant courses; and making sure students have equitable access to courses and are equitably graduating. To get better at those metrics, Cabrillo is working to implement policies and practices to improve transfer and completion; offer good professional development for staff and faculty; communicate and engage with the community; and acquire the technical and physical resources for students. In implementing this on a day-to-day basis, Wetstein will ask staff

and faculty to ask for resources to fit this matrix. The message from the top is: “If it’s not fitting this matrix, it’s not going to get funded.”

One of the challenges ahead for Cabrillo lies in the major reform of funding for community colleges passed by the California legislature last year. The old system assigned funds based on how many students were enrolled. The new model

radically alters that formula; now only 70 percent of Cabrillo’s funding is based on the number of full-time students enrolled. Ten percent of its funding is tied to how well they do on completion and transfer. Twenty percent is based on metrics associated with how many poor students Cabrillo serves. Because of its demographics, Cabrillo, like many other coastal community colleges, enrolls a higher percentage of students over the age of fifty. Those students, typically retirees, are not intentionally looking to finish a degree or transfer to a four-year school; they want to take two or



*President Wetstein draws smiles from members at the meeting.*

The second initiative highlighted by Wetstein is that, for all full-time students coming to Cabrillo from high school who maintain a 2.0 grade point average, tuition is free for the first full year, and that will soon be extended to a second year. He gives credit to the governor and the California legislature for “being very forward-thinking in freeing up the dollars during this economic growth cycle to say, this is worth funding.” Wetstein says we are moving back to the old model of the California education master plan from the 1960s, where community college was always designed to be free for 100 percent of every graduating high

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

\_\_\_ \$65.00 Individual annual membership

\_\_\_ \$100.00 Two members in a household

\_\_\_ \$10.00 Student membership

\_\_\_ Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWVC Education Fund.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

To watch [a video of Wetstein's presentation online](#), visit our website at [lwvsc.org](http://lwvsc.org).

three courses for life or cultural enrichment. So, the funding formula harms districts where there are large concentrations of retirees. Some districts got forty and thirty percent increases in their first year under the new formula, while other colleges, such as Cabrillo, are only getting small cost-of-living adjustments.

Because of the serious disparities in funding triggered by this system, it's under debate in the California legislature. They are considering capping the amount that a district can grow in any one year under the new formula at 10 percent, which would circulate some of the funding to other colleges.

The other challenge students face is dealing with the cost of living: a recent survey about housing concerns showed that 22 percent of Cabrillo students said they had been homeless at one point in the last 12 months, and 50 percent said they had experienced some form of food insecurity. Pell grants for community colleges do not cover costs beyond tuition as they are for those attending a four-year school.

To those who question why we should subsidize students with taxpayer money, Wetstein responds that they are correct, and asks them to consider that, "every dollar that you're talking about is our dollars that are spent in our community. They're spent at our college, they're spent at your restaurants or locally at our gas stations, at our grocery stores. Those dollars circulate through our economy and, let's be frank, those are dollars that are helping the most economically marginal folks in our society right now. Those are good dollars spent, in my mind."

Looking forward, Cabrillo is considering floating a new bond measure for 270 million dollars. One project funded by the bond would move STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education out of the 1960s and build a new science center to provide twenty-first century classrooms, labs, materials, and equipment so that students can prepare for twenty-first century STEM careers. Another would convert the library to include more collaborative learning spaces where groups of students can work on project-based learning. A third project would create a consolidated student services building that would be a one-stop-shop for finding counseling, advising help, and financial aid. The bond would also include a public safety training center (possibly off-campus), a modernized culinary arts space, and a few other renovation projects. Wetstein wants Cabrillo students to experience the best quality equipment so they can be prepared for today's workforce: "We've got to do some explaining for it, and we're going to need support for it."

—Pam Newbury, VOTER Editor