

LWV Leaders UPDATE

League of Women Voters of California

March 12, 2020

Dear League Leaders,

So many of us today are wishing that maybe we could just have one or two dull moments, or that maybe we lived in less interesting times. Between the stock market crash and COVID-19, we are on the leading edge of a global crisis that requires steady leadership, caution without panic, the nimbleness to work in times where nothing is business as usual, and a deep compassion for each other.

As we lean into a future that changes by the hour, it's important for us to share some practical steps and precautions in our community. Many of us are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 or someone that we live with, know, or love is at higher risk. Let's make smart, measured decisions to take care of our League family, while continuing to advance our mission and work.

At the LWVC, we are developing a business continuity plan that will allow our staff to practice social distancing by working remotely, while maintaining service levels to League members, leaders, our partners, and the public. We are also cancelling in-person state League meetings to be cautious and protect the health and safety of our staff and volunteer leaders. Board meetings and committee meetings are being held virtually, with an ongoing assessment of when we may choose to meet in-person again.

Undoubtedly, you have all been asking yourselves these same types of questions about how to move forward, and many of you have impending annual meetings about which you are making decisions. We'd like to offer some suggestions based on good practice and emerging recommendations from non-profit management organizations.

League Business Meetings. To be cautious, it is wise to consider cancellation of in person meetings at this time.

*You should consider cancelling these events as soon as possible and to try to avoid cancellation fees, or negotiate down cancellation fees with your venues.

*[Zoom video conferencing](#) has a free service that will accommodate meetings between 30-45 minutes. Other video conferencing services such as [GoToMeeting](#), [WebEx](#), etc. are also available, and appear to be working to provide

affordable less limited service to organizations as we are all navigating an emerging increasingly virtual environment.

*It is important to know that business meeting votes held via video conference are subject to the same quorum requirements as votes held when all participants are physically together, unless prohibited by your bylaws. Each of the above video conference platforms show the identities of all participants, making it easy to determine if there is quorum. They also have chat boxes in which members can pose questions or vote for a motion. These features cover the needs for conducting business as we normally do in person.

Public Meetings. To be cautious, it is wise to consider cancelling public meetings at this time. Again, you should consider cancelling these events as soon as possible and to try to avoid cancellation fees, or negotiate down cancellation fees with your venues.

*Many of you might want to consider live streaming educational meetings or speakers. A few tools to consider are [YouTube Live](#), [Facebook Live](#) and [Periscope](#) (Twitter). We consulted a digital communications specialist and YouTube Live and Facebook Live came with the strongest recommendations, as they are easy to use and access.

Communications. As you make decisions about how to proceed with your meetings and League work, it important to communicate with your members. Again, we are called on to lead and communicate with steadiness during these tumultuous times. We should communicate to our members that we are making measured, cautious decisions to protect their health and safety in our organization - while not inciting panic. Communications should be clear in the assessment of your local situation, the path forward your League will take to conduct business, how members can/should expect to engage with you in the near future, and express empathy for what your members may be feeling or experiencing.

Hopefully these tips provide some useful resources and guidance as you are tackling the challenging and fluctuating circumstances in which we find ourselves. The staff at the LWVC office are here to support you as you are navigating these decisions and paths forward, so please reach out if you have questions or need assistance. We all still have so much work to do to empower voters and defend democracy, and your leadership is critical in helping your League continue forward.

Thank you for all that you do. Take care of yourselves, and each other.



Stephanie Doute, CAE
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Carol Moon Goldberg
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