Happy New Year!
Dear Members,

January 7th will be coming up quickly in the New Year! If you plan to attend the Voter Rights Summit, you can sign up here: [http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2716839](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2716839). $20.00 covers the continental breakfast and lunch. If you need a ride, please let us know at tfarneti@cableone.net. If you plan to drive, please let us know if you have room for someone. We’ll do our best to coordinate transportation.

Our League has been blessed with many new members this year, and we are excited to have you all join in the efforts to make democracy work. Cory Shaw, VP Membership, is planning a new member orientation for Saturday, January 21st at 10:00 a.m. in my home. New members are encouraged to attend, and any other members are welcome, as well. Please RSVP to Cory at cmshaw0430@aol.com.

The February 4th meeting is one of the most essential of the year in determining our program for the ’17-’18 year. Our fiscal year is July – June. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study, review and update, and/or concurrence. It gives members and Leagues the opportunity to balance the pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider the viability of issues. The League of Women Voters of Arizona will hold its convention at the end of April, and our review of state positions in February will be voted upon at the convention - just as our review and update decisions about our local positions/new studies will be voted upon at our Annual Meeting in May. We encourage members to familiarize themselves about our positions – and think of possible issues not covered by current positions and consider: Is there widespread member interest? Is it a timely issue? If a study team wants to take on an issue – and you want to take the lead...it’s how all of our positions have been adopted. Through study, educating all members, development of consensus questions and going through the process we went through at our holiday luncheon...we can adopt a new position and then take action on it. We cannot take action unless there is a national, state or local position. You can review our state positions here: [https://lwvaz.org/lwvaz-action-agenda/](https://lwvaz.org/lwvaz-action-agenda/). You can review our Local positions in your League handbook. Make sure you know where your Membership Handbook is, because you’ll want to bring it to the meeting!

As we near the finale of 2016, I’d like to thank my board members for their commitment in leading our League – and thank all of you for your continued support and involvement.

Here’s to a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

Wishing You All
a Wonderful
Holiday Season

P resident’s Message
The New York Times
Time to End the Electoral College

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD    DEC. 19, 2016

By overwhelming majorities, Americans would prefer to elect the president by direct popular vote, not filtered through the antiquated mechanism of the Electoral College. They understand, on a gut level, the basic fairness of awarding the nation’s highest office on the same basis as every other elected office — to the person who gets the most votes. But for now, the presidency is still decided by 538 electors. And on Monday, despite much talk in recent weeks about urging those electors to block Donald Trump from the White House, a majority did as expected and cast their ballots for him — a result Congress will ratify next month.

And so for the second time in 16 years, the candidate who lost the popular vote has won the presidency. Unlike 2000, it wasn’t even close. Hillary Clinton beat Mr. Trump by more than 2.8 million votes, or 2.1 percent of the electorate. That’s a wider margin than 10 winning candidates enjoyed and the biggest deficit for an incoming president since the 19th century.

Yes, Mr. Trump won under the rules, but the rules should change so that a presidential election reflects the will of Americans and promotes a more participatory democracy.

The Electoral College, which is written into the Constitution, is more than just a vestige of the founding era; it is a living symbol of America’s original sin. When slavery was the law of the land, a direct popular vote would have disadvantaged the Southern states, with their large disenfranchised populations. Counting those men and women as three-fifths of a white person, as the Constitution originally did, gave the slave states more electoral votes.

Today the college, which allocates electors based on each state’s representation in Congress, tips the scales in favor of smaller states; a Wyoming resident’s vote counts 3.6 times as much as a Californian’s. And because almost all states use a winner-take-all system, the election ends up being fought in just a dozen or so “battleground” states, leaving tens of millions of Americans on the sidelines.

There is an elegant solution: The Constitution establishes the existence of electors, but leaves it up to states to tell them how to vote. Eleven states and the District of Columbia, representing 165 electoral votes, have already passed legislation to have their electors vote for the winner of the national popular vote. The agreement, known as the National Popular Vote interstate compact, would take effect once states representing a majority of electoral votes, currently 270, signed on. This would ensure that the national popular-vote winner would become president.

Conservative opponents of a direct vote say it would give an unfair edge to large, heavily Democratic cities and states. But why should the votes of Americans in California or New York count for less than those in Idaho or Texas? A direct popular vote would treat all Americans equally, no matter where they live — including, by the way, Republicans in San Francisco and Democrats in Corpus Christi, whose
votes are currently worthless. The system as it now operates does a terrible job of representing the nation’s demographic and geographic diversity. Almost 138 million Americans went to the polls this year, but Mr. Trump secured his Electoral College victory thanks to fewervotes less than 80,000 votes across three states: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

This page opposed the Electoral College in 1936, and in more recent years as well. In 2004, President George W. Bush won the popular vote by more than three million, but he could have lost the Electoral College with a switch of fewer than 60,000 votes in Ohio.

Many Republicans have endorsed doing away with the Electoral College, including Mr. Trump himself, in 2012. Maybe that’s why he keeps claiming falsely that he won the popular vote, or why more than half of Republicans now seem to believe he did. For most reasonable people, it’s hard to understand why the loser of the popular vote should wind up running the country.

Los Angeles Times

In 1969, Democrats and Republicans united to get rid of the electoral college. Here's what happened

Kurtis Lee – reporter

December 19, 2016

It turned out to be a bipartisan effort.

In 1969, Republican President Richard Nixon supported a push in Congress to abolish the electoral college. So too did his rival in the presidential race a year earlier, Democrat Hubert Humphrey.

The reason both united in support: Former Alabama Gov. George Wallace.

Wallace – who famously said, “Segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever” – stoked racial animosity as the candidate of the American Independent Party. He won five Southern states and netted 46 electoral votes.

Here’s why an electoral college revolt is unlikely today

Even before the 1968 election, there was a feat that Wallace would win some electoral votes and possibly cause a tie between Nixon and Humphrey. Under the Constitution, the House of Representatives would then select the president and the Senate the vice president.

Although there has been previous proposals to abolish or alter the electoral college, Wallace’s strong showing finally gave the cause some momentum.
“I believe the events of 1968 constitute the clearest proof that priority must be accorded to electoral college reform,” Nixon said in February 1969.

To change the electoral college requires an amendment to the Constitution, which needs the support of two-thirds majority in the House and Senate, followed by ratification by three-fourths of the states.

“Congress and the states have let this situation continue for too long. The electoral reform issues raised in the recent election must be acted upon,” Humphrey wrote in an op-ed published in the LA Times in April 1969. “Direct election of the president would give each American citizen an equal vote – a fundamental principle of our democratic process.”

Although Nixon supported an amendment crafted by the American Bar Assn. that called for electing the president by popular vote, he also offered his own proposal to permit the election of a president by a plurality of 40% of the electoral vote, instead of an absolute majority. If no candidate received 40%, then a runoff would occur.

Ultimately, the plurality proposal Nixon supported did come to a vote on the floor of the House. It passed overwhelmingly in September 1969.

But hope for a change to the electoral college quickly faded.

Mark Weston, a historian of the electoral college and author of the “The Runner-Up Presidency,” said the amendment was filibustered and finally killed in the Senate by a group of Southern senators concerned that states with large populations would dominate elections.

“This really was essentially one of the last serious attempts to end the electoral college,” Weston said in a recent interview.

More recent attempts to scrap the electoral college have been motivated less by fears of a tie than the odd fact that a candidate can win the popular vote but still not take the White House. In the 19th century it happened three times – in 1824, 1876 and 1888.

Democrat Hillary Clinton won 2.8 million more votes than Republican Donald Trump nationally, but when the electors gather Monday to cast their ballots in state capitals, it’s virtually certain his victory will be made official.

In the days after Clinton’s loss last month, California’s outgoing Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, incensed by the outcome – introduced a proposal to abolish the electoral college system.

The time had come, she said, to get rid of the “outdated, undemocratic system that does not reflect our modern society.”

Clinton is the second presidential candidate in the last 16 years to win the popular vote, but lose the electoral college. Al Gore won the popular vote in 2000, but lost the electoral college vote after a recount gave George W. Bush the win in Florida and put him over the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency.
Since 1969, hundreds of efforts to end the electoral college have been floated, and the only other one to gain some traction came about a decade later.

Then-President Carter, citing the need to boost participation in elections, sent reform proposals to Congress, emphasizing the need for change.

“I do not recommend a constitutional amendment lightly,” Carter said in March 1977. “I think the amendment process must be reserved for an issue overriding the governmental significance. But the method by which we elect our president is such an issue.”

The amendment did not come to a vote on the Senate floor until two years later where it did not pass. That year, a group of liberal senators from the Northern states, such as Delaware, Maryland and New York, opposed the effort, arguing, among other things, it would weaken the influence of African Americans and Jews in populous cities.

With a constitutional amendment so difficult to pass, other efforts are afoot to end the influence of the electoral college.

In 2006, John Koza, a computer scientist, penned a proposal creating the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact – an effort which states agree to award all their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote. So far, 10 states and the District of Columbia have signed up, including California, with its 55 electoral votes.

According to PolitiFact, the plan would not eliminate the electoral college, but it would dramatically alter its purpose and make it reflect the wishes of voters nationwide.

But supporters of the compact concede that even if more states eventually sign on, it’s likely to face court challenges.

Back in 2012 – before he was candidate – Trump called the electoral college a “disaster.” Now, it appears, he’s a staunch defender.

“The electoral college is actually genius in that it brings all states, including the smaller ones, into play,” he tweeted last month, just days after the election.

The League’s History

A League study of the presidential electoral process culminated in a 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote as essential to representative government. The League testified and lobbied for legislation to amend the Constitution to replace the Electoral College with direct election of the President, including provisions for a national runoff election in the event no candidates (President or Vice-President) received 40 percent of the vote. The measure, which passed the House and nearly
passed the Senate in 1971, has been revived in each Congress without success. In 1997, the LWVUS again called for abolition of the Electoral College and for direct election of the President and Vice-President in testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution.

The League has supported national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections to ensure equity for voters from all states and to facilitate the electoral process.

In February 2001, a memo was sent to the state and local Leagues outlining the League’s position on the Electoral College under the LWVUS position on Selection of the President.

The League believes strongly that the Electoral College should be abolished and not merely “reformed.” One “reform” which the League specifically rejects is the voting by electors based on proportional representation in lieu of the present “winner-takes-all” method. Such a system would apportion the electoral votes of a state based on the popular vote in that state. Instead of making the Electoral College more representative, such proportional voting would increase the chance that no candidate would receive a majority in the Electoral College, thereby sending the election of the President to the House of Representatives where each state, regardless of population, would receive only one vote. Election of the President by the House further removes the decision from the people and is contrary to the “one person, one vote” principle. The League also does not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the President.

The 2002 Convention voted to expand and update the position. The League came to concurrence on a new position in June 2004, which takes into account the entire presidential selection process and supports a process that produces the best possible candidates, informed voters and optimum voter participation.

The 2008 Convention voted to conduct a study of the National Popular Vote proposal, which would establish the popular election of the President through a compact among the states governing how they would cast their votes in the Electoral College. The 2010 Convention amended the national position to support the National Popular Vote compact as another method of selecting the President until such time as the Electoral College is abolished.

**The League’s Position**

*Statement of Position on Selection of the President, as Announced by National Board, January 1970, Revised March 1982, Updated June 2004 and Revised by the 2010 Convention:*

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal
of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

We invite any interested members to attend New Member Orientation as a refresher and to meet new members!
IMPORTANT WEBSITE REFERENCES
LWVUS Website
www.lwv.org
LWVAZ Website
www.lwvaz.org
LWVCYC Website
LWVCYC.org

We recommend that you check these out monthly, or more often. Lots of good information! Bookmark them to save on typing, or go to lwvaz.org, where there are links to click on. Or Google LWVCYC!

Our website includes current and past VOTERS, and other great material. You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter.

Reminder – Members are always welcome to attend Board meetings.
To request placement of an item on the Board agenda and/or to receive the Board agenda packet, contact the LWVCYC President a week in advance.

LWV MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION
2016-2017
Membership in the LWV is open to any person 18 and over who subscribes to the purposes and policies of the LWVUS. Dues for 2016-2017 cover payment for local ($12.00), state ($13), and national ($32.00) memberships.

Name:________________________________________
Address:_____________________________________
City/Zip:_____________________________________
Phone:_______________________________________Fax:
Email:_______________________________________

Note type of membership, and make check to "LWVCYC":
________$60/Yr Individual Membership
________$90/Yr Household Membership

Plus suggested donation:
$________Contribution to League (not tax deductible)
$________*Contribution to Education Fund (tax deductible)

*Donations to the LWVAZ Education Fund must be made by separate check, to preserve tax deductibility. This supports our Webpage and Voter Service activities. Thank you!

Both new and renewal members, please include this form with your check.
New: __________ Renewal: ________

OR
Be a “Friend" of LWVCYC:
________$50/Yr Individual or ________$75/Yr Household
(open to businesses and individuals)

Please mail this form and all checks to:
LWVCYC
PO Box 11538  Prescott, AZ 86304-1538

Invite your friends to join! It’s a great time to get involved.