

# The Boulder County Voter

League of Women Voters of Boulder County \* December 2018



## Also in this Issue:

President's Letter:.....	2
News & Announcements .....	3
Voting Methods Round-Up .....	5
Strategic Planning .....	6
A Tribute to Sara Michl.....	7

## Monthly Events Calendar

December 6:	Living Wage Longmont
December 6:	National Popular Vote Compact

**Note that The Voter does not publish a January edition**



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## Colorado and Boulder County 2018 Election Results

*By Jennifer Bales*

The 2018 elections in Boulder County and Colorado as a whole included several measures that were important to the League of Women Voters of Boulder County.

All of the Boulder County issues on which the LWVBC took a position passed. Boulder County Issue 1A provides for an alternative sentencing facility. City of Boulder 2C imposes an oil and gas pollution tax. City of Boulder 2D retains a sugary beverages tax. City of Boulder 2G streamlines elections processes by allowing online petitions. City of Lafayette 2A imposes an oil and gas pollution tax.

The results statewide were more mixed. Both congressional and legislative redistricting amendments passed in Colorado, meaning that non-partisan redistricting is the law in California and Arizona (before this year) as well as Colorado, Michigan, Missouri, and Utah (passed this year). Nonpartisan redistricting is a major goal of the League of Women Voters nationwide and in Colorado.

Other League priorities such as limitations on payday loans and prohibiting involuntary servitude under all

circumstances passed, but measures to increase funding for public schools and transportation fell short, as did setback requirements for oil and gas development.

Colorado voter turnout was 66%, a very good result for a midterm election. The country as a whole voted at an estimated rate of 49.2%, according to Time magazine - the best in a century. According to The United States Election Project, only Minnesota and Washington had better turnout numbers than Colorado. Boulder County also did very well, turning out 72% of registered voters.

Youth voting was higher than usual, though still well below the rates for older voters. According to Teen Vogue, 31% of voters between 18 and 29 years old voted, compared to 21% in the 2014 midterm elections.



Hannah Crowe celebrates redistricting reform in Colorado

### President's Letter

*By Peggy Leech, LWVBC President*

As I was looking back at our calendar for 2018, in preparation for our recent Holiday Party, I was astonished to find some of the following data for calendar 2018:

- 20+: Number of voter registration drives and tabling opportunities around the County
- 12: Number of candidate forums, debates, and candidate events
- 5: Number of public presentations about ballot issues, **plus countless others** to groups in the community

Looking at non-election highlights for LWVBC this year:

- In January, we hired our part-time contract Administrative Assistant, Mandy Nuku.
- In March, we collaborated with Families of Color Colorado and with YWCA Boulder County to host a screening at Regal Theater of *The Black Panther*, followed by discussion. We were able to use our Club Express capabilities to sell tickets. We used this model for two more events: *RBG* in June, and *Blackkkklansman* in October.
- In May, we launched our free student membership program, and we currently have 9 student members.
- In June, 9 LWVBC members attended the national (LWVUS) convention in Chicago.
- At our Fall Kickoff Meeting in September, we announced our Planned Giving program.
- In addition, we had Drinks and Dialogues, Community Conversations and film screenings/discussions throughout the year, and work by our issue teams on topics such as better voting methods, living wage, money in politics, schools, and hunger.
- For many, many, many of these activities, including the election activities, we have collaborated with other organizations in the community.

In 2019, we look forward to continuing much of our work, including living wage in Longmont, and seeing what the new legislature does on National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, voting methods, money in politics, and immigration issues. We will also focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within LWVBC.

Note: The board has decided to hold our Program Planning meetings in February this year, instead of January. Watch our website for upcoming events and meetings. Next *Voter* will be on February 1.

Best wishes for you, family and friends during the holiday season.



## **Member News and Announcements**

### **Grocery Cards**

Did you know that your grocery cards work at other affiliates? King Soopers is a Kroger Company. Some affiliates honor King Sooper customer loyalty and gift cards: City Market; Dillon Food Stores; Fry's Food Stores; Gerbes Supermarkets; King Soopers Inc.; Kwik-Shop; Loaf 'N Jug; Mini-Mart; Quick Stop Markets; Sav-Mor; Time Savers Stores; Tom Thumb Food Stores; and Turkey Hill Minit Markets. Safeway is an Albertson's company, along with Carr's, Hagen, Jewel Osco, Market Street, Pavillion, Plated, Randall's and Shaw's. It's worth asking when you are traveling.

To get your grocery gift card, call Louisa Young ([303-444-6248](tel:303-444-6248)) [Louisa.Young@Colorado.EDU](mailto:Louisa.Young@Colorado.EDU))

### **Gathering with Legislators**

On November 28, LWVBC helped host a panel discussion about legislative priorities for the 2019 session, with a focus on women's and family policies. KC Becker, Colorado State Representative HD - 13, Edie Hooton, Colorado State Representative HD-10, Jonathan Singer, Colorado State Representative HD-11, and Tammy Story, Colorado State Senate District 16 spoke and answered questions



### **Longmont Living Wage Effort**

For the past few months, several LWVBC members have been involved in a Living Wage effort in Longmont. We first gathered some information, and then we met with each of the City Council members individually. Our main proposal is that the City insert a labor practices clause into their contracts with outside services which stipulate a minimum wage and other conditions.

We have testified before City Council 3 times to date: Kay Marsh on July 31; Ruth Stemler on October 23; and Peggy Leech on November 13. We also held a Living Wage breakfast on October 24 and invited members of the faith community, non-profits, and City Council members and staff. We are working to establish a coalition, and we have determined that there is interest in this issue—not just with the City's employees, but in encouraging the business community as well.

Our next meeting is on Thursday, December 6, 11:30-1:00, at the Longmont Library, and we will be meeting with others besides LWVBC members. We will review where we have been and what we have learned, and then discuss next steps based on feedback from the Living Wage breakfast. All are welcome to attend.



## League of Women Voters of Boulder County

### National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

LWV of Boulder County is launching a new issue team, with the goal of getting Colorado to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (**NPV**) in 2019. NPV would mean the presidency would be awarded to the candidate who receives the most votes in all 50 states (the winner of the popular vote). It accomplishes this while preserving and protecting the electoral college, and it does not require a constitutional amendment.

Come find out more about NPV, and how you can help with this effort! Our first team meeting will be on Thursday, December 6, at 5:30. It will be held at the Brewing Market in the Basemar shopping center near Baseline and Broadway, in Boulder.

For more information, email Peggy Leech at [pegleech@aol.com](mailto:pegleech@aol.com).



### Holiday Party

LWVBC held its annual holiday party on November 30th at the beautiful Philanthropiece Barn. CU music students played holiday jazz, and the entrance was lighted with luminaria.



## A Voting Methods Round-Up of the Midterm Elections

By Celeste Landry of the Voting Methods Team

Fargo, ND, voters **passed** Measure 1 (64% to 36%) to use **approval voting** in municipal elections.

- *Ballot language:* Shall the Home Rule Charter of the City of Fargo be amended so that 'City officials will be elected so that each voter may vote for all the candidates the voter approves of in each race. Candidates receiving the most votes will be elected until all necessary seats are filled in each race. For each candidate's result in each race, the reported vote percentages are calculated by taking the number of votes for that candidate divided by the total ballots cast.'

Lane County (includes Eugene), OR, voters **defeated** Measure 20-290 (48% to 52%) to adopt **STAR voting**, but over 20,000 electors -- more than 2½ times the difference in votes -- left the question blank so proponents plan to continue educating the electorate and try again.

- *Ballot language:* Shall Lane County amend Charter to adopt "Score Then Automatic Runoff" method for counting candidate votes in local office races?
- *From the official Voters' Pamphlet:* The STAR voting method is a form of "preference" voting. For each office, instead of choosing one candidate, the voter is directed to score candidates on a scale from zero [no support] to five [full support]. ... The voter may score as many or as few candidates as desired. ...ballots are counted to first determine the two candidates who received the highest total scores. Those two candidates become the "automatic runoff" candidates. ...the same ballots are counted to determine which of those two candidates more voters preferred. ...each voter's ballot is considered a vote in favor of the runoff candidate to which the voter gave a higher score, with tie scores not counted in favor of either candidate.



Maine voters **used instant-runoff (aka single-winner ranked choice)** ballots for their federal contests – 1 senate and 2 house seats. The runoff feature was triggered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District, where the Democrat overtook the Republican when votes for the 3<sup>rd</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-place candidates were transferred to each voter's next choice. The Republican has filed legal action asking for a new election.

- *Directions from a sample ballot:* To rank your candidate choices, fill in the oval
  - In the first column for your 1<sup>st</sup> choice candidate.
  - In the second column for your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice candidate, and so on.Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like.

In Pueblo, CO, **proponents of instant-runoff (aka single-winner ranked choice) voting** for the mayoral contest have reportedly collected enough signatures to get the question on the January ballot.

- Pueblo recently amended its charter to publicly elect its mayor. In November voters had a traditional plurality (aka vote-for-one) election for their inaugural mayoral contest. None of the 16 candidates received a majority of the votes so the top two candidates will face each other in a January runoff. Only 75 votes, out of more than 39,000 cast, separated the 2<sup>nd</sup>-place and 4<sup>th</sup>-place candidates! In January Pueblo voters may be choosing a mayor and voting on how to elect their mayor in the future.

## **League Strategic Planning Update**

*By Elizabeth Crowe and Mary Ann Wilner*

The LWVBC has been a leader in Colorado in its success at developing and following a five-year strategic plan to guide its work at influencing public policy, reaching out to new partners, expanding voter services and strengthening its internal governance. These planning processes are critical to make sure our time and resources are used wisely, and have tangible impact in our community.

During the past 18 months, our League Issue Teams have been working to sharpen their focus on policy changes aligned with Making Democracy Work for All, and that adhere to the team's mission. We've worked to answer the questions: what change is most necessary in our community to strengthen democracy? How will we make it happen?

For example, the Social Policy Team goal for 2019 is to increase voter registration and participation of low-income residents and other vulnerable populations, in the 2020 election. Our Voting Methods Team is aiming for increased public awareness of alternative voting methods, and an increase in groups using these methods to make decisions. The Money in Politics Team wants to increase awareness of the ways in which money influences elections and policies. The Team is currently considering specific advocacy goals for campaign finance reform legislation. For each goal, Team leaders and members are devising a set of activities to ensure we achieve the goal.

These goals also provide focus and direction for our Operations Teams – like Membership, Communications, Events, and Fund Development. The more specific our Team goals, the more successful we are likely to be in engaging our members and community partners; communicating effectively with elected officials; and ensuring that the democratic process really does work for *everyone* in Boulder County!

If you love strategic planning, we can put your skills and talents to good use! Please contact Mary Ann Wilner at [mawilner3951@comcast.net](mailto:mawilner3951@comcast.net) to find out how you can help.



Debbie Vink



Strategic planning meeting



## League of Women Voters of Boulder County

### A Tribute to Sara Michl

We note with sadness the recent passing of Sara Michl, age 78. Sara joined LWV in 1972, and she transferred to Boulder over 25 years ago. She is survived by her husband, Josef Michl, and her son, John Allensworth Michl. LWVBC members extend our sincere sympathy to Sara's family.

Sara was a philanthropist who supported many organizations and institutions over the years, including the League of Women Voters. She served on several City of Boulder committees, including the Planning Board, the Wetland Working Group, and the Transportation Master Plan Study Committee.

In our League, she served on the Transportation Committee and the Natural Resources Committee. According to Anne Norwood, Sara was the force behind a 1997-98 publication from the League: *Will "Success" Spoil Boulder County?* In 2011, according to Celeste Landry, Sara was active in organizing a forum on the City of Boulder's Municipalization proposal: *Should Boulder Form Its Own Municipal Electric Utility?*



Please enjoy a sampling of quotes below:

"This past summer she was a ranger in the national forest. As I have thought about Sara and our friendship, I realize that it began with the common love for the League and then developed from there. Boulder will miss her and so will I." - Sue Anderson, former LWVBC President, now living in North Carolina.

"Sara was always in the background and was always so positive about the League's important mission and work. Over the years I knew her she had some new ideas for the League for which she strongly advocated. Sara acknowledged and embraced the many changes we have made over the last few years to modernize the League. She continued to give us strong encouragement and support. I miss her already!" - Ruth Stemler, LWVBC Membership Director.

"Sara was all about Natural Resources, Environmental Planning, and related issues. In recent years, even though she considered herself "inactive" as she wasn't working with any teams, she seemed to me to be quite "active" in many ways. She was able to lend effective support, whether public or within League, to just about anything our League was involved in." - Deborah Hayes, LWVBC webmaster.

"She was a catalyst. You would enter a conversation with her feeling lukewarm about her position, and it would end with you making a commitment to do something." - Louisa Young, LWVBC Fund Development Director.

"If we don't combine our traditional methods of thorough study and discussion with new "quick and easy" ways to reach a far more diverse and potentially engaged but uninformed and occupied public, the League's positive impact will remain extremely small." - Sara Michl, July 30, 2018.





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