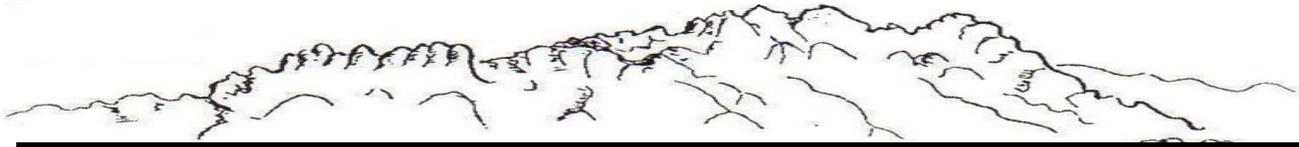


The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
January 2014



Lunch with a Leader

Program Planning for Study and Action

Monday, January 13, 2014, 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room
3011 Buena Vida Circle

The League has two important components. One is voter services activities and the other is program for study and action that leads to advocacy.

On January 13, local League members will come together and plan (1) local program that will be voted on by members at the Annual Meeting on April 19, and (2) national program that will be voted on by delegates to the LWVUS Convention, June 6-10, Dallas. Each session is one hour long with a half-hour lunch break.

Your resources for preparing for this meeting include:

- For our local program, turn to the Membership Directory, pp. 28-25, for statements of our current positions. Also, two studies are in progress, Voting Impediments and Happiness/Quality of Life, and the chair of each will be giving updates about the status of these studies.
- For LWVUS positions, please consult the web site, <http://www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition>.

When you make recommendations, please keep the following in mind:

1. Is there widespread member interest?
2. Is this a timely issue?
3. Is government action the most effective way to address the issue.

Join us and help provide direction for League advocacy!

RSVP by January 6, 2014 to Ruth Benjamins
Tel: 527-0204, Email: benjpa@q.com

CALENDAR

January 6 (Monday) **Board Meeting**

1:30 - 3:30 p.m., City Hall Room 2007

January 6 (Monday)

Deadline for making reservations **Lunch with Leader**

RSVP: Ruth Benjamins
Tel: 527-0204, Email: benjpa@q.com

January 13 (Monday)

10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch with a Leader: Program **Planning for Study and Action**

RSVP: Ruth Benjamins
Tel: 527-0204, Email: benjpa@q.com

January 16 (Thursday)

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Third Thursday Book Club

The Post-American World
by Fareed Zakaria

Host: Erika Graf-Webster - 521-0600

January 27-28 (Monday & Tuesday)

League at the Legislature 2014
Santa Fe (see p. 9)

Notable Dates in January

1 - Happy New Year

Birthdays:

9 - Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947)

11 - Alice Paul (1885-1977)

20 - Martin Luther King (1929-1968)

Save the Date

April 19 - LWVGLC Annual Meeting

June 6-10 - LWVUS Convention,
Dallas

The VOTER

Volume 44, Issue 8 - January 2014
Usually Published Monthly

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

President - Erika Graf-Webster

Vice President & Program
Roberta Gran

Secretary - Christina Little

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

Director, Membership
Johnnie Aldrich

Co-Director, Voter Services
Gracia Class
Gwen Hanson

Nominating Committee
Chair: Marjorie Burr
Elected Member: Sue Cain

STUDY GROUPS

Voting Impediments
Roberta Gran - 373-8490
Johnnie Aldrich - 522-1544

Happiness/Quality of Life
Joy Goldbaum - 527-8620

STANDING COMMITTEES

Affordable Housing
Vicki Simons -522-4813
Christina Little-373-1882

Education
Jane Asche - 532-8087
Sue Cain - 647-8250

**Mental Health Services
in Doña Ana County**
Becky Beckett - 522-8171

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

ACTION COMMITTEE
Barbara Goedecke - 522-0323

Web Master
Dale Yeo - 405-7580

Newsletter Editor
Bonnie Burn - 526-0013
burnb@comcast.net

*President's Message*

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all of you.

January is usually the month of renewal—we plan what we want to accomplish for the rest of the year. Our League's annual Program for Study and Action Planning Meeting is scheduled for January 13. **Please note that this meeting starts at 10:30 a.m.! PLEASE ATTEND** – this is a really important meeting.

A broad range of subjects will be covered:

- We will review and discuss each of our existing local studies and programs that have standing committees. These include Education, Affordable Housing, Voting Impediments, and Happiness/Quality of Life. The committee chairs will be asked to present the status of their work and recommend whether these efforts should be continued during the coming year or have reached a state of completion.
- We will then entertain proposals for new studies to commence in May at the start of our next fiscal year. So think about things that the League should study, and present your recommendation. Please keep in mind the resources that would be required for a newly proposed study—would we have enough members to volunteer to participate?
- This year, we also will be providing recommendations to LWVUS for its Program for Study and Action. This is a biennial event wherein the national League seeks input for identifying new issues to study or existing LWVUS positions to be reviewed and updated, and/or providing concurrence for existing positions. LWVUS also is asking which of the national positions, if any, we have used in our work in the community. In order to prepare for this, please review the LWVUS positions. Here is a link to the position statements: <http://www.lwv.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition> . We will be required to fill out response forms about our recommendations that need to be sent to LWVUS by March 1.
- Finally, I would like to spend a few minutes at this meeting to talk about some suggestions from our recent League retreat that would enable the League to be more efficient and effective and provide opportunities for us to get to know each other better.

On January 27 and 28, our state League will be hosting all the New Mexico local Leagues for "League at the Legislature 2014" (see p. 9). This an opportunity to talk to our legislators and provide them with information about our advocacy areas. In addition, LWVNM also has scheduled a reception for the attendees as well as a panel discussion on Tax Fairness in New Mexico. All members are invited to attend. Several of us, myself included, have already committed to go.

Erika

Board Highlights - December 2, 2013 - Christina Little, Secretary

- The next board meeting will be held on Monday, January 6, 2014, 1:30 p.m. at Las Cruces City Hall in Room 2007. These are interesting meetings, and **all League members are invited to attend.**
- The Voting Impediments Study has completed 200 surveys. The next step will be to write a report.
- As a follow-up to the Retreat, Erika has appointed an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of herself, Gwen Hanson, and Ardyth Norem to work through the many suggestions that were made at this meeting. The group will organize items into categories (items that can be implemented quickly and items that are useful for the long term). Eventually the committee will develop a long-term plan. There will be some discussion of their preliminary conclusions at the January 13, 2014 Program for Study and Action Planning Meeting.

**In Memoriam - Fran Clark
(1927-2013)**

League member and community activist Fran Clark died on December 3 from injuries sustained in a serious automobile crash.

Fran received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Butler University and worked in Las Vegas, NM for 26 years (1964-1992). While there, she founded a Community Crisis Center at Highlands University where she worked. She and John, her husband of 49 years, spent two years in New Zealand (1970-72) where she was a psychologist at Cherry Farm Hospital.

The Clarks moved to Las Cruces in 1992. Fran worked at the Community of Hope. An activist pursuing accessible universal health care, she procured services for the NM Native American population, and promoted the health care initiative, Health Security for all New Mexicans. In 2002, she was instrumental in setting up the local organizing committee for this health care program and contacted the League of Women Voters about joining the committee.

In the early 2000s, she joined the League when it endorsed Health Security. She served on the Affordable Housing committee until last year. She worked incredibly hard on issues she cared about, especially health care reform. She will be missed.



Membership Directory Update

New Members

Jerry Gunderson
278 Day Dreamer Dr.
Las Cruces, NM 88005
Tel: (575) 556-9471
Email: jgunderson1@comcast.net

Friends of the League

- John Ameriks, M.D.
- Anonymous
- Robert Buggert
- Sharon Burbano
- Reed R. Burn
- Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.
- Dental Associates PA,
- David Sudimack, D.D.S.
- Donald Dresp
- Edward Jones - Connie Lee
- Roberta Gran
- Nancy & Ken Hall
- Win Jacobs
- Keller Williams Realty, Laura Szalay
- Al Kissling
- Pat Kratz
- Marlene Lavetts
- Lilley & O'Connell Law Offices
- Louise P. Lockhart
- Barbara Myers
- Jean Ossorio
- Clifford Pelton
- Nancy Phillips
- Kathryn Schultz
- Shirley Soules
- Marie Sutter-Sinden
- Sunspot Solar Energy
- Donna Tate
- Williams Design Group, Inc.
- Zia Engineering & Environment
Consultants

Thank You

Look Back - Legislative Breakfast - Saturday, December 7, 2013*Bonnie Burn, Reporting***NM Legislators and
Committee Assignments****Senators****Mary Kay Papen**

Senate President *Pro Tempore*
Corporations
Indian Affairs,
Committee of Committees
Capitol Outlay

Joseph Cervantes

Vice-Chair, Judiciary
Conservation
Chair, Drought Subcommittee
(Interim)

Representatives**Mary Helen Garcia**

Chair, Voters & Elections
Business & Industry

Jeff Steinborn

Vice-Chair,
Energy & Natural Resources
Taxation & Revenue

Doreen Y. Gallegos

Appropriation & Finance
Agriculture & Water
Enrolling & Engrossing-B

Bill McCamley

Energy & Natural Resources
Taxation & Revenue
Enrolling & Engrossing-A

**New Mexico
Legislative Session**

Noon, January 21 thru
Noon, February 20, 2013

Roundhouse, Santa Fe

President Erika Graf-Webster welcomed six of our 12 Doña Ana County legislators. Before turning the floor over to them, she listed the priority legislative issues for GLC: education, and affordable housing. She asked each legislator to name his or her committee assignments before briefly describing what he or she hoped to accomplish during a short 30-day session.

Senator Cervantes, first to speak, recognized Senator Mary Kay Papen as Senate President *Pro Tempore*. This is quite significant since it has been 70 years since a woman has held this position.

Senator Cervantes and the other legislators focused on the shortness of the session and the priority work that will arise from passing a budget and dealing with the issues on the Governor's Call. Because it is an election year for members of the House of Representatives, some legislation will be initiated without hope of being passed.

The resolution of the mental health providers crisis is a priority issue for our area. Constituents contact local legislators about the disruption in service they are experiencing.

The small portion of the Spaceport gross receipts tax (GRT) designated for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education in Doña Ana County has come under attack. Representative Lundstrom (D-Gallup) wants to make it part of the education equalization formula and have it shared throughout the state.

Two of our Representatives, Jeff Steinborn and Bill McCamley serve on the House Taxation & Revenue Standing Committee.

Representative McCamley is interested in looking at tax reform that includes examining the current 300 tax exemptions to determine which should be kept and which should be eliminated. He also is working with NMSU's Water Resources Research Institute on water policy, on STEM education efforts in the community, and the state college lottery scholarship to ensure that students will continue to have access to it.

Representative Steinborn wishes to look at tax reform in a holistic manner to determine the effectiveness of corporate

(Continued on page 6)

Southern New Mexico/EL Paso Joint Land Use Study Policy Committee Meeting
December 11, 2013, Doña Ana County Government Center
Reported by Win Jacobs

[Editor's Note: This is a second report on the progress of this policy committee that seeks public input about how to protect and enhance the quality of life in local communities while maintaining the value of the military training and testing environment. The first meeting was reported in The VOTER, July/August 2013 issue. With much appreciation, we thank Win Jacobs for attending the public meetings and keeping us informed.]

On its website, www.snmepointlanduse.com, the purpose of the study is "to highlight common interests such as economic growth, more efficient infrastructure, healthier environments, improved quality of life, and the protections of Department of Defense and civilian investments and missions."

The website lists the six participating counties: Doña Ana, Sierra, Otero, Lincoln, and Socorro in New Mexico and El Paso in Texas. List of other participants included: City of Alamogordo, City of Las Cruces, City of El Paso, Fort Bliss, White Sands Missile Range, Holloman AFB, New Mexico State Land Office, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico Office of Military Base Planning and Support, Military Base Planning Commission, and New Mexico Spaceport Authority. Each entity has a seat on both the Policy and the Technical committees. The military entities, however, do not have a vote, in line with the nationwide protocol allowing advisory but not voting participation, in order to avoid even the perception of undue influence. AECOM Technical Services, Inc. is the consultant for this project.

Since the public sessions of the 2013 summer, both AECOM staff and the designated stakeholders formed into committees termed Policy and Technical and have been busy. The draft report in its entirety will include voluminous data supporting possibilities and plausibilities as well as all public input both from the summer sessions and from written communications from interested parties including individuals.

This third meeting on Policy was a status report. Liz Drake, AECOM project manager, presented the draft report in executive

summary fashion. The top five concerns identified in the public input meetings include water, energy and renewables, aviation noise, quality of life and accommodating military growth. Upon the affirmative vote of the Policy Committee, she projected public access to the complete draft report (electronic and hard copy in selected locations) for the second week of January 2014 and project completion by June 2014. The vote was positive and was supported by a statement from the Technical Committee that it had found the accompanying data "comprehensive and fine."

Two personal notes. One, I was encouraged to see that since the summer meetings water had moved up from an issue that "others" must deal with to the top five for this project. Two, among the few private citizens attending the meeting was a gentleman who spoke of getting no response to his written letter of concern. He identified himself as a rural resident with a rural business and no cell phone or computer access. In that instant, I understood how ranchers may have felt in the time before WWII, a time of choice between the greater good, taking land for White Sands, and the individual good, of private land and plans: the one must be served, the other at least taken into account even if protection is unfeasible. A plethora of governmental entities sits on these Committees; an individual has himself and a county commissioner. While the passing years have more than proved the larger benefits of that White Sands decision, the larger community must not ignore concerns of individuals.

Joint Work Session of the Las Cruces City Council and Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education, December 3, 2013, 1:00 p.m., Las Cruces Council Chambers - *Bonnie Burn, Observer*

All City Councilors and School Board members were present. There was no representation from the County Commission. There were three agenda items:

1. School Site Committee: Sharon Thomas, City Mayor Pro Tem Emeritus, gave a PowerPoint presentation about current criteria to be considered when identifying locations for new school construction. These include: Can a large portion of the student body walk to school? Are there safe routes to and from the school? Is there access from at least two adjacent streets? Will the facility be away from railroad tracks and arroyos? Is the school in a walkable residential area? Co-location and joint use possibilities also should be considered. Local school siting committees need to work with other policy and technical committees to ensure compliance with comprehensive land use plans. Information for how to plan for a new school was presented. Finally the committee suggested that it could be either a finite or standing committee that could develop policies, make recommendations, and be advisory. A memorandum of understanding signed by the city, county, and school district would legitimize its continued efforts.
2. Safe Routes to School: Hillrise Elementary School has the first pilot program developed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The program has been expanded to reach 13 schools and about 4,100 students and depends on volunteers and four paid staff. Two issues of concern are expanding the program to all 39 elementary schools and finding recurring funding to support four coordinators.
3. Court Youth Charter School Campus was described in a PowerPoint presentation. This is a major renovation project that will incorporate the J. Paul Taylor Academy, a charter school serving students K-8, Alma d'Arte Charter High School, and the Mesilla Valley Youth Court. It is a \$9 million project included among the projects in the Bond Election scheduled for February 4.

Legislative Breakfast *(Continued from page 4)*

tax incentives and create infrastructure such as back lot buildings that would bring more film industry work to the Las Cruces area. He also is for increasing transparency in government by web casting interim committee hearings and archiving committee meetings on the Internet that would provide convenient access to the legislative process.

Doreen Gallegos gave us a first-hand account of what it means to be a first-time legislator. She has been assigned to committees that are helpful to her human services work. Her goal is to bring more budget dollars south.

The Q & A was lively and went on well after the meeting was over.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

**Las Cruces Public Schools
School Bond & Mill Levy Election
February 4, 2014**

**\$65 million school bond issue and
three-mill public school building levy.**

NO TAX RATE INCREASE

**Current school tax rate of \$9.81 for
every \$1,000 of taxable value of a
person's property will remain the same if
the two ballot questions are approved.**

**Voting by consolidated precincts
Contact Jo Galvan, 527-5811**

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps can enable greater coverage and information gathering, provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, increase League's visibility, and assist in networking with other groups. We appreciate the reports that are submitted by Observers. Following the League practice of publishing nonpartisan, objective reports, the information submitted may be edited for content and brevity.

Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) Board Meeting, December 10, 2013, 6:30 p.m. - *Sue Cain Observer*

All board members were present and all opening agenda items were approved.

The following recognitions were shared:

- Vista Middle School's Team of 32 students won First Place in the Fuel Challenge Science Team competition, winning five trophies and receiving \$1,000 in prize money for use in their school.
- Six LCPS teachers qualified and received \$5,000 stipends for transfer from A/B schools to D/F schools in an effort to raise the latter schools grade.
- Las Cruces High School's Soccer and Football Teams were recognized for winning NM State Championships.

Superintendent Rounds reported about the Expanded Charter School Campus Project that includes renovation and new construction at the Court Youth Center site. This project is part of the upcoming bond election.

Next, he reported on the "LCPS Alternate Demonstration Competency" draft framework. Dr. Steven Sanchez and a committee developed a chart showing the alternate ways of meeting NM Public Education Department's (PED) requirements that all students must pass a competency test in all major curriculum areas to earn their high school diplomas. In January, the final draft chart will be presented for Board approval and then sent on to the PED.

"Resolution Regarding Local Control" provides the district's rationale supporting local control of our school systems. Local school boards are more knowledgeable about their students and how best to meet

those needs by working with school administrators, teachers, students and parents.

Finally, the "Resolution Regarding Teacher Evaluation" was discussed at length. The evaluation will focus on frequent teacher observation to identify issues and challenges but also will encourage professional development for the teacher. The ultimate goal is to use "best practices" that meet the needs of the students.

In her Report to the Board, Associate Superintendent Andrea Fletcher shared that she has been working with selected schools and their teachers in the Turnaround Initiative. She reported that this program has become very successful among the participating teachers and administrators. It will eventually be developed into a model that can be used in the rest of the LCPS. It demonstrates that teachers want to develop the best learning environment and practices for their students. This program is a good example of the Board's intent in "Resolution Regarding Teacher Evaluation" being more controlled by our local public schools.

Approval was given for Head Start for 2012-13 Annual Report, the Construction Projects Report, and the possible move of the La Academia Dolores Huerta Charter School to another site.

Adoption of the Resolution, Amended Resolution, and Proclamation of Special School Bond and Special Public School Buildings Tax Election were passed. All three of the resolutions will be posted on the LCPS web site: <http://lcps.K12.nm.us/>

The December 10th Board meeting in its entirety may be viewed on the LCPS's web site <http://lcps.K12.nm.us/>.

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS (Continued)

Mesilla Valley Public Housing

Authority (MVPHA), November 19, 2013,
Noon - *Vicki Simons, Observer*

Acting Chairman Felix Cordero brought the meeting to order at noon in the Conference Room of the Housing Authority offices. He was joined by Commissioners Steve Pandak and Theresa Olguin-Fisher. November 20 is the deadline for applications for the two vacant commission positions on the board, one from the City of Las Cruces and one from Doña Ana County.

The routine business of public input (LWV Observer was the only member of the public present), approval of agenda and approval of the October minutes was done. There were two resolutions up for approval by the Board, and they were passed with no discussion. One involved approval of the 2013 Audit Report and the other approval of a piece of land in Hatch deeded to the non-profit organization of Tierra del Sol for development of a tax-credit new construction unit of affordable housing. MVPHA no longer has plans for the land and the price is falling. It was advantageous to sell it now.

Reports from management followed: MVPHA has hired a new Housing Choice Voucher Specialist, Brenda Real-Vasquez, who has worked for the El Paso Housing Authority for some years and brings needed experience to this position. Three other new staff members have been added to her department. Routine reports followed from the Accountant, Office Manager, Modernization/Maintenance Manager, Housing Programs Manager and Executive Director.

There was a short discussion of the sequestration's termination of rental vouchers under the Section 8 HUD program. The voucher program is probably the most useful method to aid in providing affordable housing in many areas. There have been small-scale riots at housing offices in other

areas of the country when these vouchers are released. MVPHA avoids this by only issuing vouchers on-line. It is hoped that the issuance of vouchers will begin again early next year.

There will be no Board meeting in December. The Board's strategic planning session is planned instead.

South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) Board Meeting, November 21, 2013, 1:30 p.m. at the Amador Transfer Station - *Susan Schmugge, Observer*

The first order of business was a presentation by RBC Capital that offered three financial options to the city councilors and the county commissions regarding expansion of the SCSWA to implement the proposed Flow Control Ordinance. Discussion followed and questions were addressed to the presenters. Any future action will require the county and city council to act in tandem. There also was discussion about how this money would be integrated with the debt process and debt service for both the city and county.

Patrick Peck gave his director's report. The average daily tonnage drops at this time of year and continues to drop through January due to the winter holidays. The routine financial report included items that may have to be updated at the six-month date and will be on the agenda in January. Director Peck also reported on a committee looking at solid waste bills and how the amount owed is broken down. There is agreement among the members that the changes should better reflect the surcharge fee, the services provided, and show separate fees for the billing period.

I left the meeting at 3:45 p.m., as the Authority moved into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

 **League Day at the Legislature and Reception
January 27 - 28, 2014**

Legislative Reception, Monday, January 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail - (1 block from the Roundhouse)

**Panel Discussion: Tax Fairness in New Mexico
2014 Legislative Budget Priorities/Initiatives**

Sen. Peter Wirth, sponsor of budget reform bills (invited)
Bill Jordan, Policy Director, New Mexico Voices for Children
Regressive tax laws have been enacted in recent years. How can we put a stop to
this and make a more progressive tax system?

League Day, Tuesday, January 28
Hearings at the Roundhouse starting at 8 a.m.

League Educational Event from 10:30 to Noon
Voting, Campaign, & Ethics Legislation

Viki Harrison, Common Cause NM
NM's Behavioral Health Crisis
Linda Siegle, National Association of Social Workers, NM Chapter
New Mexico Land Office, Morgan Hall
310 Old Santa Fe Trail

**Legislative Packets: Your legislators must hear from constituents
where the League stands on issues!**

Pick up information packets Monday evening or 10:30 Tuesday at the
Land Office (Morgan Hall)

Accommodations: **Garrett's Desert Inn** is offering League members a special
rate of \$59 plus tax that includes free parking (normally \$8/day). Call 1-800-888-
2145 to make a reservation. Use "swing vote" as the rate code and reserve before
December 27. Parking is also free for League members attending the Legislative
Reception and League Day activities.

Contact: Dick Mason, Vice President, Co Chair Action, (505) 239-3804.



League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces
 P.O. Box 8322
 Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

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 Web Site: www.lwvglc.org



FIRST CLASS



**Program
 for Study & Action
 Planning Meeting**

**Starts at 10:30 a.m.
 on January 13, 2013
 Good Samaritan Social Center**

**January 2014
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**Time to Sign Up
 ACTION Team**

Respond to legislative action alerts
 during the 2014 NM Legislative
 Session (1/21-2/20/2013)

To Sign Up call or email
 Barbara Goedecke
 Email: gbarb@zianet.com
 Tel: 522-0323

Membership Application

**After November 1—\$30 for Individual; \$15
 for each additional household member
 Annually: \$60 Individual; \$30 Second
 Household; \$30 Students**

Name: _____
 2nd Household: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____

Contributions:
 _____ League of Women Voters Education
 Fund (Tax Deductible)
 _____ Contribute to the League (Not tax
 deductible)
 Make checks payable to LWV of Greater Las
 Cruces., and mail to P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces,
 NM 88006

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