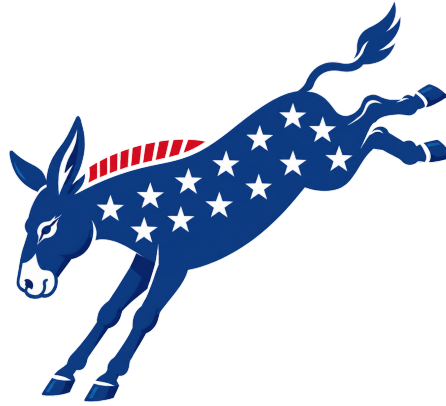




El Cerrito Democratic Club

★ Since 1952 ★

September 2026 Newsletter

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ECDC

PO Box 192

El Cerrito CA 94530

Newsletter Editor: Courtney Helion

1. El Cerrito Democratic Club General Information

Since 1952, the El Cerrito Democratic Club (ECDC)—one of the oldest Democratic clubs in the state—has provided a forum for area residents to discuss and take action on issues and campaigns of local, national, and international importance. Our General Membership Meetings are open to all and usually held on the fourth Tuesday of each month except October and December, when we typically have our annual dinner and holiday party.

Our monthly General Membership Meetings are generally in a hybrid format accessible both in person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remotely via Zoom.

For monthly meeting and calendar reminders, you are invited to download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) invites to your computer:

https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/tZUpCOCvqDkpEtH10GiVZ7NcegZqDI_tJeMI/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGpqjwjHdKXsxGCRpwcBo_CXe3wpnpej7d1zU_CChZpNS31M-V4I5ZWl8z6

For those of us who've been able to come to Hana Gardens, it's been wonderful to be in community and gather in person. Whether you join us in person or by Zoom, we encourage you to come a few minutes early to mix-and-mingle with fellow ECDC members.

The El Cerrito Democratic Club and its activities are supported by volunteers and the annual dues of members. Please see the "Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions" section towards the end of this newsletter for directions on how to join the ECDC or renew your membership. El Cerrito Democratic Club executive board officer elections occur annually each January.

Special thanks to our 2025 volunteer officers:

El Cerrito Democratic Club Officers (2025)

- President – Neil Tsutsui
- Past President – Champagne Brown
- Executive Vice President / VP Membership – William Ktsanes
- VP Media – Madeline Kronenberg
- VP Programs – Ruthie Abelson Olivas
- VP Publications – Courtney Helion
- VP Records – Leslie Reckler
- VP Treasurer – Ed Crowley

The specific duties of officer positions are described in section "VII. Officers" of the Bylaws posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/>.

If you're interested in participating more actively in the ECDC, please consider volunteering with the Club and/or joining the Executive Board.

Help is always greatly appreciated!

- Courtney Helion, VP Publication

2. Information and Zoom Link for the September 22th, El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meeting

Our General Membership Meetings are generally held in a hybrid format, accessible both in person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and via Zoom.

To join the monthly ECDC General Membership Meetings via Zoom, please use this link:
<http://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

Zoom Meeting ID: 814 7976 2385; Zoom Passcode: c5fQKR

Dial In by Phone: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 408 638 0968;
Meeting ID: 814 7976 2385; Phone Passcode: 920761

Please note that the Passcode is different if you dial in by phone rather than join through Zoom.

September Meeting Agenda

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle, Zoom Logins

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:31 pm – Review and Approve the September 2026 Meeting Agenda (**Action Item**)

6:31 pm – Review and Approve the August 2026 Meeting minutes (**Action Item**)

6:35 pm – Officer reports

President (Neil Tsutsui)

Executive VP (William Ktsanes)

Membership (William Ktsanes)

Media (Madeline Kronenberg)

Publications (Courtney Helion)

Treasurer (Ed Crowley)

Records (Leslie Reckler)

Programs (Ruthie Abelson Olivas)

6:45 pm – Contra Costa Dems (Champagne Brown)

6:50 pm – Program – “**2026: A Defining year for BART**”, BART Leadership

7:50 pm – Announcements (2 minutes each)

7:55 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn

Next Membership Meeting: **ANNUAL DINNER! October 17, 6-9pm.**

3. August Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

President Tsutsui called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Review and Approve the August 2026 Meeting Agenda (Action Item)

On the motion of Betsy Bashor and the second of Courtney Helion, the agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

Review and Approve the July 2026 Meeting minutes (Action Item)

On the motion of Neil Tsutsui and the second of Gabe Quinto the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Officer reports

President (Neil Tsutsui)

SAVE THE DATE!! October Dinner: Assemblymember Jesse Arreguin will be the guest speaker! October 17th Saturday! Venue and meal planning will commence.

Executive VP (William Ktsanes) Absent

Membership (William Ktsanes) Absent

Neil reports membership is about 200.

Media (Madeline Kronenberg)

The Website and Facebook are all caught up.

Publications (Courtney Helion)

Submit articles by the 15th of the month.

Treasurer (Ed Crowley) No Report

Records (Leslie Reckler) No Report

Programs (Ruthie Abelson Olivas) No Report.

Neil reports that she is working on next month's speaker

Contra Costa Dems (Champagne Brown) Absent

Neil:

August 16th and 23rd ECDC/ DPCCC had endorsement interviews for EC City Council, Stege, Special Districts, CoCo Community College.

DPCCC - Not all candidates for the El Cerrito City Council were on the DPCC/CoCo Dems' ballot. DPCC/CoCo Dems says anyone that did not submit their questionnaire was not listed. DPCC/CoCo Dems are clarifying.

OpaVote will go out tonight. Members have three days to vote. Please check your SPAM if you do not see the email in your email box.

Program – “Discussion of California Propositions, 2026”, Neil Tsutsui

These are summaries. Please screen the video for additional commentary.

WCCUSD Measure V - West Contra Costa Unified School District TK-12 Parcel Tax Renewal
[VoteYesOnV](#)

Main question: Should West Contra Costa Unified School District renew its existing parcel tax at 7.2 cents per square foot of building area for nine years, beginning July 1, 2027 for nine (9) years?

Not a New Tax. Renews at the Same Rate. Not a Forever Tax. Renews for Nine (9) Years.

Pro: The measure would preserve locally controlled funding for academics, teacher retention, STEM laboratories, career training, arts, technology, mental-health services and counselors. Supporters say that if the measure does not renew, it is very likely to result in cuts to programs and services. This is not a new tax; it maintains the same rate of 7.2 cents per sq. ft. of building, and is not a forever tax. This funding measure has been on the tax rolls since 2004 and has been renewed by the voters three times. Measure V renews for nine (9) years and would come back to the voters again for approval at that time. The measure includes strong independent oversight and annual audits. Strong public schools make strong communities. Protect our vital local funding measure.

Con: Property owners would continue paying for another nine years. Opponents argue that the district should address budget management, declining enrollment and public trust before asking voters to continue the tax. The tax is based on building size rather than property value or ability to pay.

Supporters' response: Measure V does not increase the tax rate. it renews an existing local funding source at 7.2 cents per building square foot. Supporters argue that rejecting it would worsen, rather than solve, WCCUSD's budget problems by eliminating roughly \$8 million for

district programs. They point to independent oversight, annual audits, senior and disability exemptions, and restrictions on how the revenue may be spent. They also argue that schools are paid on attendance and not enrollment, but declining enrollment does increase many fixed costs, making stable local revenue especially important. Measure V would expire after nine years unless voters renew it again.

Main supporters: West Contra Costa Strong Schools Alliance—Yes on Measure V; The WCCUSD Board of Trustees voted 5–0 to place it on the ballot, United Teachers of Richmond, many labor and city council members, retired WCCUSD trustees and educators, League of Women Voters West Contra Costa, Sarah Butler, President, Contra Costa County Board of Education, thousands of parents, students and community members.

Main opponents: As of August 26, no organized “No on V” committee or formal opposition fundraising campaign appears in Contra Costa County’s filing system.

Largest campaign donors:

- For: United Teachers of Richmond PAC — \$24,360
- Against: No reported contributions located

Public dollars and taxpayer cost:

- Estimated revenue: \$10,238,737 annually
- Nine-year estimated total: approximately \$92.1 million, if annual collections remain near the estimate
- Tax rate: 7.2 cents per building square foot
- Examples: a 1,000-square-foot building pays \$72 annually; 1,500 square feet pays \$108
- Roughly 80% goes to WCCUSD and 20% to eligible charter schools
- Senior homeowners and eligible disabled homeowners may claim exemptions
- Passage requires a two-thirds vote

[Regional Transit Measure](#) [Connect Bay Area](#)

Main question: Should voters in five Bay Area counties enact a 14-year sales tax to fund BART, AC Transit, Muni, Caltrain, VTA, SamTrans and smaller operators such as WestCAT?

The increase would be 0.5% in Contra Costa, Alameda, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties and 1% in San Francisco. It requires a simple majority of votes cast across the five-county district.

Pro: Supporters say the revenue is necessary to prevent deep service cuts, station and route closures and less-frequent service. It would also support safety, cleanliness, affordability, accessibility, coordinated fares and transfers, and some locally selected transit projects and road repairs. The measure requires financial reviews, reporting and independent oversight.

Con: The sales tax is regressive and would raise the cost of taxable purchases for 14 years. Opponents argue that transit agencies should reduce administrative and overtime costs, improve efficiency and reconsider major capital projects before receiving another approximately \$1 billion annually. They also object that a fixed regional formula directs much of each county's revenue to large operators rather than leaving spending decisions locally. Supporters dispute whether restricted capital funds can legally be redirected to operations.

Main supporters: Connect Bay Area Transit; state Sens. Scott Wiener and Jesse Arreguín; San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie; Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee; Bay Area Council; SPUR; SEIU Local 1021; ATU Local 1555; Seamless Bay Area; and numerous transit, environmental, labor and business organizations.

Main opponents: Committee for Affordable Bay Area Transit—No on RTM, sponsored by the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association.

Largest campaign donors supporting the measure:

- SEIU Local 1021 Issues PAC approximately \$550,000
- Chris Larsen \$500,000
- Salesforce \$500,000
- Genentech \$250,000
- Nicholas Josefowitz \$250,000
- Meta \$250,000
- TransitAmerica Services \$250,000
- HNTB approximately \$250,000
- Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555 approximately \$250,000
- Autodesk \$175,000

Largest campaign donors opposing the measure: No itemized donor contributions were returned in the county filing portal as of August 26. The opposition committee told KQED that it was initially self-funded by its members.

Public dollars and taxpayer cost:

- Official ballot estimate: approximately \$980 million annually
- Approximate 14-year total: \$13.7 billion, if annual collections remain near that estimate
- Contra Costa increase: 0.5%, or 50 cents per \$100 of taxable purchases
- MTC estimates approximately \$25 million annually for Contra Costa Transportation Authority projects, plus operating funds for WestCAT, County Connection, Tri Delta Transit and other small East Bay operators
- Most revenue would support transit operations, including BART and AC Transit
- Passage requires a simple majority districtwide

[Proposition 1 Affordable Housing and Veterans Bond](#)

Main question: Should California borrow \$11.25 billion for affordable housing, homeownership assistance, supportive housing, infrastructure, student and farmworker housing, and veterans' home loans?

Pro: Supporters say the bond would help produce or preserve tens of thousands of affordable homes, reduce homelessness and expand homeownership without directly raising taxes.

Con: No official argument against Proposition 1 was submitted. The principal concern is the long-term cost of borrowing.

Main supporters: Affordable-housing organizations, veterans' groups, Housing California, Habitat for Humanity California and the California Federation of Teachers.

Main opponents: No major organized opposition is currently listed.

Largest campaign donors: Building a Better California — \$1 million; NPH Action Fund — \$703,548; MidPen Housing — \$350,000.

Public cost: Approximately \$500 million to \$600 million annually for about 25 years.

[Proposition 2 Larger State Rainy Day Fund](#)

Main question: Should California double its maximum rainy day reserve from 10% to 20% of General Fund revenues and require additional saving during strong revenue years?

Pro: Supporters say larger reserves would reduce cuts to schools, health care and public safety during recessions and discourage unsustainable spending during boom years.

Con: Opponents say it could make constitutionally required taxpayer rebates less likely and does not guarantee new funding for education, health care or public safety.

Main supporters: California Professional Firefighters, Assembly Budget Committee Chair Jesse Gabriel and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

Main opponents: Reform California, Assemblymember David Tangipia and Senator Steven Choi.

Largest campaign donors: No supporting or opposing committee reached the FPPC's \$1 million reporting threshold.

Public cost: No fixed dollar estimate. The state would build larger reserves and could make additional debt payments.

[Proposition 3 Permanent High-Income Tax Rates for Schools](#)

Main question: Should California make permanent the higher income-tax rates currently paid by the wealthiest 2% instead of allowing them to expire after 2030? Revenue would be allocated 89% to K–12 schools and 11% to community colleges.

Pro: Supporters say it preserves existing—not new—tax rates, prevents billions in education cuts and frees other General Fund money for health care and reserves.

Con: Opponents say voters were promised the tax would be temporary, California already has high taxes and the state should address spending before making the rates permanent.

Main supporters: California Teachers Association, National Education Association, California Federation of Teachers, school employees and health-care organizations.

Main opponents: Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and business organizations.

Largest campaign donors supporting: California Teachers Association — \$18.275 million; National Education Association — \$4 million; California Federation of Teachers — \$750,000.

Largest campaign donors opposing: No opposition committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public dollars: Maintains an estimated \$5 billion to \$15 billion in annual state revenue after 2030.

[Proposition 4 Public Financing of Election Campaigns](#)

Main question: Should California repeal its prohibition on public campaign financing and allow state and local governments to establish voluntary programs for qualifying candidates? Proposition 4 does not itself create or fund a program.

Pro: Supporters say public financing could reduce candidates' dependence on wealthy donors and give qualified candidates from more backgrounds an opportunity to compete.

Con: Opponents say it opens the door to taxpayer-funded campaigns without setting an overall limit on what future programs could cost.

Main supporters: League of Women Voters of California, California Common Cause, California Nurses Association and California Clean Money Campaign.

Main opponents: California Taxpayers Association, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and former FPPC Chair Dan Schnur.

Largest campaign donors: No supporting or opposing committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public cost: A few hundred thousand dollars annually for state administration. Future costs would depend on programs later adopted.

[Proposition 5 State Recall Election Changes](#)

Main question: Should California eliminate the simultaneous vote on replacement candidates in statewide recalls? If a governor were recalled, the lieutenant governor would take over; other vacancies would be filled later under existing law.

Pro: Supporters say it closes a loophole that can allow a replacement candidate to win office with far less than majority support.

Con: Opponents say it takes away voters' ability to immediately choose a replacement and weakens the recall as an accountability tool. A recalled official could also run in a later special election.

Main supporters: League of Women Voters of California and California Common Cause.

Main opponents: Senate Republican Leader Brian Jones and Assemblymember Joe Patterson.

Largest campaign donors: No supporting or opposing committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public cost: Possible state and local savings or costs in the millions when a recall occurs.

[Proposition 37 Middle-Class Homeownership Loans](#)

Main question: Should California authorize up to \$25 billion in revenue bonds to provide qualified buyers with loans covering up to 17% of the price of certain newly built homes?

Pro: Supporters say it would help middle-income families overcome the down-payment barrier, encourage new construction and operate without direct taxpayer expense because borrowers repay the bonds.

Con: No official argument against was submitted. Concerns include limiting assistance largely to new homes, uncertain borrower demand and special construction-defect provisions for participating builders.

Main supporters: California Association of Realtors, building-trades unions, housing organizations and veterans' groups.

Main opponents: No major organized opposition is listed.

Largest campaign donors supporting: Building a Better California — \$6 million; California Association of Realtors-affiliated committees — approximately \$5 million; National Association of Realtors — \$2 million; United Brotherhood of Carpenters — \$800,000.

Largest campaign donors opposing: No opposition committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public dollars: Up to \$25 billion in revenue bonds, with no direct state or local cost anticipated.

[Proposition 38 Immunology Research Bond](#)

Main question: Should California borrow \$8.4 billion for immunology and immunotherapy research, with roughly half directed to one qualifying UC-affiliated research institute and half awarded as grants?

Pro: Supporters say the money could accelerate treatments for cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease and other illnesses, offset federal research cuts and require California discounts on resulting treatments.

Con: Opponents say research priorities should be determined through scientific review rather than the ballot and that promised licensing revenue may not come close to paying the debt.

Main supporters: Michelson Center for Public Policy and numerous patient and disease-research organizations.

Main opponents: The official opposition argument was signed by health-policy researcher Robert M. Kaplan. No major opposition campaign is listed.

Largest campaign donors supporting: Gary Michelson and the Michelson Center for Public Policy — approximately \$29.2 million across affiliated entities; Meyer Luskin — \$5 million.

Largest campaign donors opposing: No opposition committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public cost: Approximately \$500 million to \$600 million annually for about 20 years.

[Proposition 39 Voter Identification](#)

Main question: Should voters be required to show government-issued identification in person and provide matching identification digits on mail-ballot envelopes?

Pro: Supporters say voter ID would strengthen election security, improve voter rolls and increase public confidence. The measure provides free voter identification.

Con: Opponents say existing verification already works and the new rules could disenfranchise eligible voters, create privacy risks and invalidate ballots over technical mistakes.

Main supporters: Californians for Voter ID, Reform California and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

Main opponents: U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, ACLU of Northern California, California Donor Table, California Nurses Association and California School Employees Association.

Largest campaign donors supporting: Richard Uihlein — \$10.5 million (Founder/Owner U-Line. He and his wife are two of the largest donors in the USA to conservative and Republican politicians and causes); Reform California — \$3.043 million; Nicole Shanahan — \$370,000.

Largest campaign donors opposing: Quinn Delaney — \$1.5 million; Dignity California/SEIU Local 2015 — \$1 million; SEIU California State Council — \$512,500; California Teachers Association — \$500,000.

Public cost: Between tens of millions and the low hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

[Proposition 40 One-Time Billionaire Wealth Tax](#)

Main question: Should California impose a one-time 5% tax on the covered assets of billionaires who lived in California on January 1, 2026, with 90% for health care and 10% for education, food assistance and administration?

Pro: Supporters say approximately 200 billionaires should help replace federal health-care cuts and prevent hospital closures, coverage losses and higher premiums.

Con: Opponents say the tax could drive wealthy taxpayers and investment from California, reduce continuing income-tax collections and provide only temporary money without lowering health-care costs.

Main supporters: SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West, California Nurses Association and Representative Ro Khanna.

Main opponents: California Teachers Association, California Taxpayers Association, State Building and Construction Trades Council and business organizations.

Largest campaign donors supporting: SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West and affiliated committees — approximately \$31.4 million.

Largest campaign donors opposing: Building a Better California — \$13.5 million; Ripple Labs — \$5 million; Chris Larsen — \$5 million; California Business Roundtable Issues PAC — \$450,000.

Public dollars: The LAO estimates tens of billions in temporary revenue, but potentially less than \$1 billion annually in lost continuing income-tax revenue.

[Proposition 41 Audits and State Spending-Limit Rules](#)

Main question: Should programs funded by new statewide special taxes undergo pre-election and recurring State Auditor reviews, and should new taxes be prohibited from excluding their revenue from the state spending limit?

Pro: Supporters say voters deserve independent information about whether programs are effective and how new tax revenue would be spent.

Con: Opponents say the measure is designed to invalidate Proposition 40, could require costly audits before initiatives even qualify and would make it harder to fund health care and education.

Main supporters: California Society of CPAs, former State Auditor Tom Hayes and California Taxpayers Association.

Main opponents: SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West.

Largest campaign donors supporting: Building a Better California — \$58.25 million; Reform California — approximately \$21,800. Building a Better California lists Sergey Brin and L. John Doerr III as its leading underlying donors.

Largest campaign donors opposing: No opposition committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public cost: Audit costs are unknown and would largely be paid from new tax revenue.

[Proposition 42 Ban on New Personal-Property and Retroactive Taxes](#)

Main question: Should California prohibit new state taxes on financial assets and other personal property—including business interests, investment accounts and retirement assets—and restrict retroactive taxes?

Pro: Supporters say it protects savings, pensions, retirement accounts and small businesses from future wealth or personal-property taxes.

Con: Opponents say the measure is much broader than necessary and is principally intended to invalidate Proposition 40's billionaire tax while restricting future voter and legislative options.

Main supporters: California Small Business Association, AMVETS, construction-trades representatives and taxpayer groups.

Main opponents: SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West.

Largest campaign donors supporting: Building a Better California — \$64.25 million; Reform California — approximately \$22,500. Building a Better California lists Sergey Brin and L. John Doerr III as its leading underlying donors.

Largest campaign donors opposing: No opposition committee reached the FPPC threshold.

Public dollars: Future state revenue could be lower, but the amount is unknown.

[Proposition 43 Two-Thirds Vote for Citizen-Initiated Local Special Taxes](#)

Main question: Should local special taxes placed on the ballot by citizen initiative require two-thirds approval instead of a simple majority? This could include citizen-initiated parcel taxes for schools and other dedicated local services.

Pro: Supporters say all local special taxes should meet the same two-thirds standard, regardless of whether elected officials or citizens place them on the ballot.

Con: Opponents say it allows roughly one-third of voters to block measures supported by a large majority and makes it harder to fund schools, housing, public safety, roads and health services.

Main supporters: California Business Roundtable, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, California Taxpayers Association and real-estate interests.

Main opponents: Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, Californians Against Waste, Sierra Business Council and public-service advocates.

Largest campaign donors supporting: California Business Roundtable Issues PAC — \$9.85 million; Protect Proposition 13/Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association — \$1.038 million; Kilroy Realty — \$1 million; Douglas Emmett Properties — \$1 million. The Business Roundtable PAC lists Peter Thiel and Kim DeGeorge as leading underlying donors.

Largest campaign donors opposing: No opposition committee reached the FPPC threshold. The Secretary of State reported approximately \$500,000 in opposition contributions through August 2.

Public dollars: Future local tax revenue could be lower, but the amount is unknown.

[Proposition 44 Community Health-Clinic Spending Requirement](#)

Main question: Should nonprofit community health centers generally be required to spend at least 90% of their revenue on program services or face financial penalties?

Pro: Supporters say the requirement would direct more public money toward patients and limit excessive executive compensation, consultants and administrative overhead.

Con: Opponents say the definition could restrict spending on equipment, technology, translation, outreach and clinical management, potentially forcing clinics to reduce services or close.

Main supporters: SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West and clinic workers.

Main opponents: California Primary Care Association, AltaMed, California Medical Association, Planned Parenthood affiliates and numerous community clinics.

Largest campaign donors supporting: SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West — approximately \$16.93 million.

Largest campaign donors opposing: AltaMed Health Services — \$5.468 million; California Primary Care Association entities — \$2.026 million; WellSpace Health — \$1.5 million; North East Medical Services — \$1.5 million; Family Health Centers of San Diego — \$1.5 million.

Public cost: Enforcement would cost the low tens of millions annually, paid through fees charged to affected clinics.

[Proposition 45 Streamlined Environmental Review](#)

Main question: Should California impose tighter deadlines and narrower court-review rules under CEQA for housing, schools, hospitals, water, clean-energy, transportation and other designated “essential” projects?

Pro: Supporters say permitting delays and litigation increase the cost of housing and infrastructure; firm deadlines would help essential projects move faster.

Con: Opponents say it weakens environmental review, reduces public participation and gives developers greater power to advance projects with potentially harmful effects on air, water and public health.

Main supporters: California Chamber of Commerce, California Building Industry Association, utilities, housing organizations and business groups.

Main opponents: Environmental, labor, nursing and public-health organizations.

Largest campaign donors supporting: Building a Better California — \$10 million; California Building Industry Association and its Issues Committee — approximately \$4.255 million; CalChamber — \$2 million; Edison International — \$2 million; California Business PAC — \$1.15 million.

Largest campaign donors opposing: Clean and Healthy California — \$7 million; Members' Voice of the State Building Trades Council — approximately \$2 million; State Building and Construction Trades Council independent-expenditure PAC — approximately \$2 million; Iron Workers PAC — \$500,000.

Public cost: Near-term state and local costs would be in the high tens of millions annually and could exceed \$100 million, with uncertain longer-term effects.

Announcements (2 minutes each)

- **Saturday August 29, 2026**

2:00 p.m.

[San Francisco Mime Troupe.](#)

“Wreckage”

Cedar Rose Park

Rose St & Chestnut St

Berkeley, CA 94702

Free!!

- **Friday, August 28, 2026, 3:00 p.m.**

El Cerrito Senior Action Committee

Vet Hall

El Cerrito Candidate Forum with Forrest M. Lanning and Mary Jane “MJ” Jawill. **MJ**

Good of the Order

Adjourn 8:26 p.m.

Next Membership Meeting: Sept 22, 2026

4. The Earlier We Vote the Earlier We Will Get Results!

by Stephanie Singer

(Stephanie Singer is a resident of El Cerrito, a member of ECDC, and a former election official.)

It is frightening to think about all the ways Trump is preparing to undermine the upcoming election. The President and his representatives have defunded and cut staff at crucial departments and institutions that used to form the safety net for the American electoral system, including the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA); the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC); and the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force. They are talking about sending ICE agents to polling places.

Attacks on our elections could lead to chaos, court challenges and enough uncertainty about who actually won certain contests to delay the seating of some of the legitimate winners.

If even a handful of Congressional or Senate candidates are prevented from being seated on January 3 it could create a continuity-of-government crisis, where Congress is ostensibly functional but has no legitimacy with the public. If enough seats are affected in the House, the House may not be able to elect a leader or function by any definition, which could lead to political violence or other dire consequences.

Numerous election protection groups are working, largely through the courts, to protect the voting process. What, if anything, can voters do?

California voters can help defuse one of Trump's planned attacks on the process by voting as early as possible, or voting at a polling place. Trump has been trying to discredit California elections by criticizing the delay between Election Day and the final vote counts. This delay is due in part to legitimate, careful processing of tens of millions of ballots, along with a variety of checks to audit and verify election results. But the delay can be made worse by a wave of mail ballots arriving at the last minute.

Voting early, or voting in-person on Election Day, front-loads the time-consuming process of *authentication* — checking that the ballot was cast by an eligible voter. If you vote at a polling place, the poll workers check that you are on the official voter list. If your ballot arrives at the County Registrar's office from a dropbox (recommended) or by mail well in advance of Election Day, the Registrar's staff can verify the information on your ballot envelope — your address, signature, etc. — well in advance of Election Day.

Counting mail ballots, once they are out of the envelopes, can be done quickly, in large batches. Checking the envelopes in the first place is a slower process, which can cause delays if it has to be done after Election Day. When voters choose to return their ballots early enough, these delays can be avoided.

Of course, any voter has the right to return their ballot as close before the deadline as they like. But the earlier we choose to vote — the earlier we make our decisions about the various propositions and candidates and get our ballots to the election officials — the more we are helping to protect the midterm election from vicious attack. So please return your ballot as early as you can, or vote in person. And spread the word to your fellow Californians. This is a concrete way to fight back against Trump and his allies who would destroy our democracy.

5. El Cerrito Annual Dinner



**EL CERRITO
DEMOCRATIC CLUB
ANNUAL DINNER**

**BUY TICKETS AT:
[HTTPS://ECDCLUB.ORG](https://ECDCLUB.ORG)**

**OCTOBER 17, 2026
6 - 9 PM**

*Arlington Community Church
52 Arlington Ave.
Kensington*

**Early bird tickets: \$65
After Oct 3: \$80**

*Dinner provided, please bring
drinks to share.*

6. Support Our Endorsed Candidates and Measures

Support Our Endorsed Candidates and Measures!

This year, the ECDC held joint endorsement forums with the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) on August 16 and 23, and we reviewed the state-wide Propositions at our August 25 membership meeting. Endorsement voting was available for members in good standing as of July 11, 2026 (45 days before the vote) and occurred via OpaVote on August 25-28. At the May membership meeting, the Club voted to endorse all Democrats who are running for state-wide office against a Republican opponent. The official Club endorsements for the November 3, 2026 election are shown below.

Local Races	
El Cerrito City Council (two open seats)	Carolyn Wysinger
Stege Sanitary District (three open seats)	Ted Lam
Contra Costa Community College District, Ward 1	<i>No consensus</i>

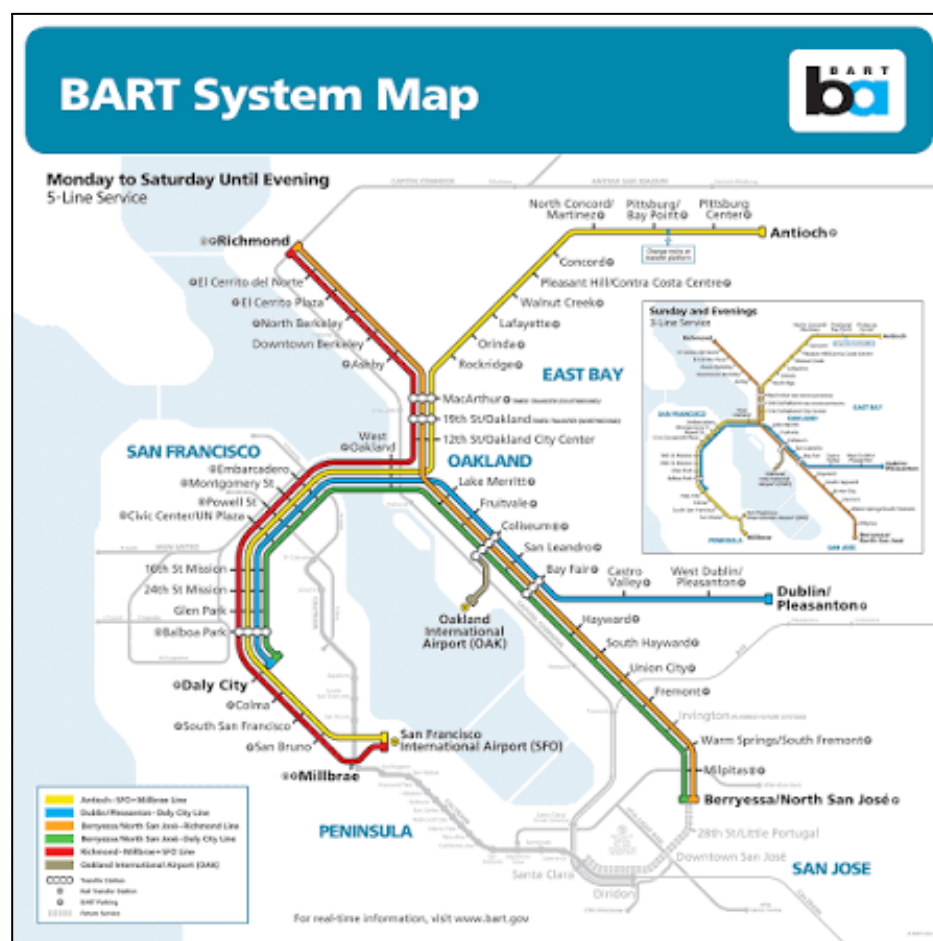
Voter Initiatives	
Measure V: West Contra Costa Unified School District parcel tax renewal	Yes
Regional Transit Measure (half cent sales tax for BART & other transit)	Yes
CA Proposition 1 (housing & veteran bonds)	Yes
CA Proposition 2 (budget stabilization)	Yes
CA Proposition 3 (tax rates on high earners)	Yes
CA Proposition 4 (public financing of campaigns)	Yes
CA Proposition 5 (recall election reform)	Yes
CA Proposition 37 (middle income homebuyer loans)	Yes
CA Proposition 38 (immunology research bonds)	<i>No consensus</i>
CA Proposition 39 (elections, voter ID)	No
CA Proposition 40 (billionaire tax)	Yes
CA Proposition 41 (restrictions on new special taxes)	No
CA Proposition 42 (ban new wealth taxes)	No
CA Proposition 43 (2/3 vote on local special taxes)	No
CA Proposition 44 (90% clinic spending requirement)	No
CA Proposition 45 (CEQA environmental review)	<i>No consensus</i>
Statewide and Regional Races	

US House of Representatives District 8	John Garamendi
California Governor	Xavier Becerra
California Lieutenant Governor	Fiona Ma
California Attorney General	Rob Bonta
California Secretary of State	Shirley Weber
California State Controller	Malia Cohen

-Neil Tsutsui

7. September Program: 2026 - A Defining Year for BART

Join BART leadership to hear about how BART's safe, clean, and reliable service supports the Bay Area's economy and quality of life.



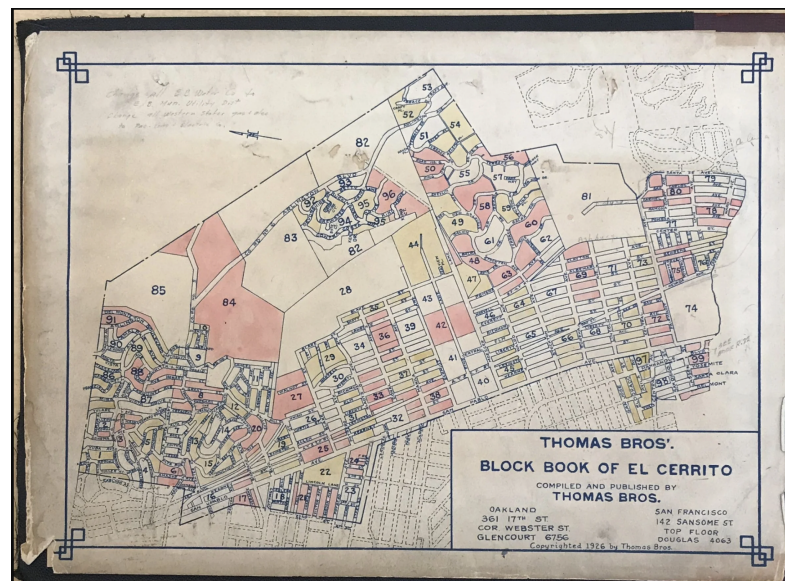
8. Future Events - *Mark Your Calendar!*

El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meetings and Events

ECDC Executive Board Calendar – The El Cerrito Democratic Club’s Executive Board (E-Board) meets monthly via Zoom for about an hour to handle routine club business, plan programs for the monthly General Membership Meetings and discuss newsletter content. As with the General Membership Meetings, the E-Board meetings are open to the public. The Zoom Link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89264608412?pwd=c2sySEI5ZEplL1lHVUM5bERCZGpEQTO9>.

Below is the ECDC E-Board Calendar for the end of 2026:

2026 El Cerrito Democratic Club Executive-Board Calendar (E-Board)				
Monthly ECDC Executive Board Meeting (E-Board)	Deadline for Submitting the General Membership Meeting Agenda and Articles for the ECDC Newsletter	Monthly Newsletter Completed	Monthly ECDC Newsletter Emailed (by 6:00 pm)	General Membership Meeting Date
Thursday 10/1/2026	Sunday 10/15/2026	Tuesday 10/20/2026	Saturday 10/24/2026	Annual Dinner! (October 17th)
Thursday 11/5/2026	Saturday 11/7/2026	Wednesday 11/11/2026	Saturday 11/14/2026	Tuesday 11/17/2026
Thursday 12/3/2026	Tuesday 12/15/2026	Thursday 12/17/2026	Saturday 12/19/2026	Holiday Party! TBD



Other Community Events

El Cerrito Candidate Forum - League of Women Voters - 6:00 - 8:00 pm, Wednesday
September 30, 2026.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS***
OF WEST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

INFORM
EMPOWER
ENGAGE
A STRONGER
DEMOCRACY TOGETHER

CANDIDATE FORUM

EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL

MEET THE CANDIDATES. HEAR THEIR IDEAS.
BE AN INFORMED VOTER.

**WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 30, 2026
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

**IN PERSON**
El Cerrito Veterans
Memorial Hall
6401 Stockton Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

**ALSO ONLINE**
Join via Zoom webinar
(link at lwwwccc.org)
Watch the livestream
(details at lwwwccc.org)

**SAME CONVERSATION.
TWO WAYS TO JOIN.**
Attend in person or online
and be part of the discussion.

The League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa County will host a
nonpartisan forum featuring candidates for the El Cerrito City Council.
Candidates will answer community-submitted questions on key local issues.

**LEARN
ABOUT THE
CANDIDATES**

**HEAR THEIR
POSITIONS**

**GET READY
TO VOTE**

**EL CERRITO. OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.**

Visit <http://tiny.cc/ECforum>
Zoom meeting link -
no registration required.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. We do not support or oppose candidates or political parties.
lwwwccc.org | info@lwwwccc.org

El Cerrito City Council Meetings – 6:00-9:00 pm, first and third Tuesdays of most months; hybrid format; in the City Council Chambers at City Hall (10890 San Pablo Avenue) and via Zoom; meeting materials and recordings available at <https://www.el-cerrito.org/113/City-Council>

Tentative Upcoming El Cerrito City Council Agenda Items: (select highlights)

- Tuesday, October 6th – Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District Presentation; Fire Safe Program Presentation
- Tuesday, October 20th – 2026 Legislative Update; Annual Sundar Shadi Garden Club Awards
- Tuesday, November 17th – Quarterly General Fund Budget Update
- Saturday, January 9th - Council Working Retreat (Open to the Public)

Full agendas are available at <https://www.elcerrito.gov/482/Council-Meeting-Videos-Materials>.

Instructions for submitting comments to the City Council are here:

<https://elcerrito.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13983/Instructions-for-Public-Comments>

“Coffeetime” Discussions with El Cerrito City Councilmember William Ktsanes –

by appointment; 9:30 am-12:00 pm first and third Saturday mornings of most months at El Cerrito Natural Foods Annex, 10387 San Pablo Avenue; other days, times and locations available upon request; click here to schedule an in-person meeting:

[Meet with William](#) / <https://tinyurl.com/Meet-William>



El Cerrito Farmers Market – 9:00 am-1:00 pm, every Tuesday and Saturday; El Cerrito Plaza, 9000 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530; southwest corner parking lot between Trader Joe's and Wells Fargo Bank; www.contracosta.ca.gov/7549/Contra-Costa-Certified-Farmers-Markets



DPCCC and West County Dem Events

<https://contracostadems.com/events/>

West County Dems Monthly meeting - 6:00 - 7:30 pm, second Tuesday of the month; This is a local Democratic club chartered by DPCCC. Meetings are via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83146226722?pwd=cHRneSsxYkVnWWdTcTNQRnBBTmhhdz09>

For more info, contact the club. <https://www.westcountymunicipalclub.com>

DPCCC General Membership Meeting - 7:00 - 10:00 pm, If you are not a DPCCC member and wish to attend, please RSVP to the DPCCC Secretary at secretary@contracostadems.com.

If you are a DPCCC member, you should have received an email with details for the meeting about seven days in advance. If you did not, please email the DPCCC Secretary at secretary@contracostadems.com.

If you know of other community events that may be of interest to our members, please submit them to Courtney Helion at ecdc.pubs@gmail.com for publication in future newsletters!

- Courtney Helion, VP Publications

9. Membership Renewal Reminder and Instructions

REMINDER! – ECDC annual memberships expire annually on **September 30th**. If you have not yet done so, please renew for 2026-27. **Now is the time!**

You can do so online at: <https://ecdclub.org/join/>

Or by mailing a check to: ECDC Membership
PO Box 192
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dues are \$5 for students, \$20 for individual members, and \$30 for two adults at the same address. The newsletter comes with membership and is delivered electronically by email. The added cost for a printed, hard-copy, postal mailed newsletter is \$18 (in addition to dues). Please make checks payable to “El Cerrito Democratic Club” and provide an email address for all individual members.

There have been some issues with double paying on Paypal. **To avoid paying us twice, please wait a day or more if you suspect your payment hasn’t gone through!**

If you have membership questions, please email William Ktsanes at membership.ecdc@gmail.com.

Thank you!

- William Ktsanes, VP Membership

10. Call for Newsletter Submissions

The El Cerrito Democratic Club Newsletter is published eleven months a year (each month with the exception of a combined December-January issue) in advance of the General Membership meetings. ECDC members, friends and supporters are invited to submit articles and announcements regarding local issues and events of interest. Submissions should be emailed to ecdc.pubs@gmail.com for review and editing.

- Courtney Helion, VP Publications

11. Link to the ECDC Website and Bylaws

Periodically the Club updates our Bylaws. The bylaws were changed in October 2018 to meet DPCCC requirements; revisions were proposed and adopted during the January 2021, August 2022 and March 2023 ECDC meetings. The ECDC Bylaws are posted on the ECDC website at <https://ecdclub.org/club-documents/>