



El Cerrito Democratic Club

January 2026 Newsletter

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ECDC
PO Box 192
El Cerrito CA 94530

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

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 Public

2. Call for Candidates: VP of Membership – El Cerrito Democratic Club

The El Cerrito Democratic Club is seeking volunteers to run for Vice President of Membership in our upcoming officer elections. This is a key leadership role for anyone who enjoys outreach, organization, and helping strengthen our local Democratic community.

The VP of Membership's responsibilities include:

- Managing and maintaining accurate membership lists
- Accessing online voter information to support club activities
- Leading membership development and recruitment efforts
- Facilitating affiliation with other Democratic organizations
- Assist with the annual re-chartering of ECDC

To support your success, you will receive hands-on training during your first three months in the role, ensuring you feel confident and prepared.

This position is a wonderful opportunity to help grow and energize the club, connect with fellow Democrats, and make a meaningful impact at the local level. No prior board experience is required....just a commitment to our shared values and a desire to get involved.

If you're interested or would like to learn more, please reach out to Immediate Past President Champagne Brown (cbrownecdc@gmail.com) to submit your nomination.

Your participation keeps our club strong and thriving!

3. Information and Zoom Link for the Tuesday, January 27 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.

January Meeting Agenda

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle, Zoom Logins
6:30 pm – Call to Order
6:31 pm – Review and Approve the January 2026 Meeting Agenda (**Action Item**)
6:35 pm – Officer reports
 President (Neil Tsutsui)
 Executive VP (William Ktsanes)
 Membership (Greg Lyman)
 Media (Madeline Kronenberg)
 Publications (Courtney Helion)
 Treasurer (Ed Crowley)
 Records (Leslie Reckler)
 Programs (Ruthie Abelson Olivas)
6:50 pm – DPCCC report (Champagne Brown)
6:55 pm – Election of ECDC Officers for 2026 (**Action Item**)
7:05 pm – Solicitation of topics for programs in 2026
7:45 pm – Announcements (2 minutes each)
7:55 pm – Good of the Order
8:00 pm – Adjourn

Next Membership Meeting: February 24, 2026

4. WISE is WISer: Learn About AI Healthcare Denials

Guest speakers Ana Malinow from the Movement to End the Privatization and Cindy Young from the CARA Legislative Team will explain what WISer is and how we can organize to stop it.

WISer is a new model from the Medicare and Medicaid Innovation Center that expands prior authorization using artificial intelligence to seniors and people with disabilities on Traditional Medicare. This model begins in six states in January 2026 (California is not included yet).

We will learn how artificial intelligence denies and delays care for 30 million people on Medicare Advantage while enriching health insurance companies. The Innovation Center now plans to extend this same denial process to beneficiaries on Traditional (Original) Medicare in six target states before rolling it out nationally. Let's organize to stop this now!

Can't make it? Still register to get a recording after the forum!

<https://bit.ly/WISerforum>



WISE is WISeR

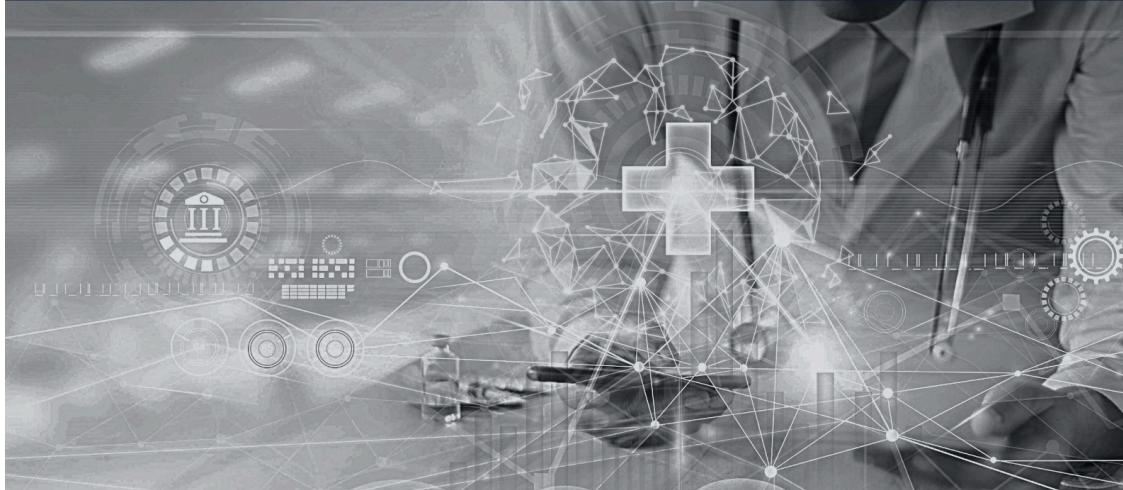
When: January 30th at Noon on Zoom

We will learn how WISeR artificial intelligence denies and delays care for 30 million people on Medicare Advantage while enriching health insurance companies.

The Innovation Center now plans to extend this same denial process to beneficiaries on Traditional (Original) Medicare in six target states before rolling it out nationally.

Let's Organize to Stop AI Healthcare Denials

REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK 



[Register Now for the WISeR Forum](#)

5. 2025 ECDC Financial Report

El Cerrito Democratic Club Combined Income Statement
For the year ended 31 December 2025

Revenue	Actual	Budget	Difference
Member Dues Revenue	2,755.00	2,600.00	155.00
Newsletter Revenue	19.00	50.00	(31.00)
Meeting Pizza Revenue	-	-	-
Contribution Revenue	115.00	200.00	(200.00)
Miscellaneous Revenue	30.00	200.00	(200.00)
Total Revenue	2,919.00	3,050.00	(131.00)
Expenses	Actual	Budget	Difference
Meeting Expense - Room Rental	2,332.80	1,515.00	817.80
Meeting Expense - Voting Service	-	40.00	(40.00)
Meeting Expense - Speaker Honoraria	-	100.00	(100.00)
Meeting Expense - Equipment	-	200.00	(200.00)
Total Meeting Expense	2,332.80	1,855.00	477.80
Campaign Expense - Printing	-	-	-
Campaign Expense - Political Contributions	-	-	-
Campaign Expense - Miscellaneous	-	-	-
Total Campaign Expense	-	-	-
General Expense - Office Supplies	28.04	50.00	(21.96)
General Expense - Insurance	-	-	-
General Expense - Affiliations and Memberships	40.00	-	40.00
Total General Expense	68.04	50.00	18.04
Communication Expense - Website & E-mail	-	550.00	(550.00)
Communication Expense - Online Membership Web Service	-	-	-
Communication Expense - Newsletter Printing	-	100.00	(100.00)
Communication Expense - Newsletter Postage	-	60.00	(60.00)
Communication Expense - Post Office Box	248.00	248.00	-
Total Communication Expense	248.00	958.00	(710.00)
Membership Outreach Expense	80.00	75.00	-
Printing Expense - Recruitment	-	100.00	(100.00)
Total Recruitment Expense	80.00	175.00	(95.00)
Charitable Contributions - General	-	-	-
Total Charitable Contributions Expense	-	-	-
Financial Expense - Mechanics Bank Fees	80.00	120.00	(40.00)

Financial Expense - Dues & Contributions PayPal Fees	112.17	150.00	(37.83)
Financial Expense - Dues & Contribution Square Fees	1.86	-	1.86
Total Financial Expense	194.03	270.00	(75.97)
Total Expenses	2,922.87	3,308.00	385.13
Net Income (Loss)	(3.87)	3,050.00	(3,053.87)
Net Income from Annual Dinner	531.52	\$215.00	316.52
Total Net Income (Loss)	527.65	(43.00)	570.65

6. Future Events - *Mark Your Calendar!*

El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meetings and Events

ECDC January Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, January 27, 2026;

(4th Tuesday of the month); hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

*Preliminary Monthly Program: **Solicitation of topics for programs in 2026***

ECDC February Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, February 24, 2026;

(4th Tuesday of the month); hybrid format, in-person at Hana Gardens Senior Apartments (10860 San Pablo Avenue, next to El Cerrito City Hall) and remote via Zoom link <http://tinyurl.com/ECDCMonthlyMembershipMeeting>

*Preliminary Monthly Program: **TBD***

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=c2sySEI5ZEpJL1IHVUM5bERCZGpEQT09>.

Below is the ECDC E-Board Calendar going into 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 1/1/2026	Thursday 1/15/2026	Wednesday 1/21/2026	Saturday 1/24/2026	Tuesday 1/27/2026
Thursday 2/5/2026	Sunday 2/15/2026	Wednesday 2/17/2026	Saturday 2/21/2026	Tuesday 2/24/2026
Thursday 3/5/2026	Sunday 3/15/2026	Tuesday 3/17/2026	Saturday 3/21/2026	Tuesday 3/24/2026

Other Community Events

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

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=cHRneSsxYkVnWWdTcTNQRnBBTmhzdz09>
For more info, contact the club. <https://www.westcountydemocraticclub.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](mailto:Courtney.Helion@ecdc.pubs@gmail.com) at ecdc.pubs@gmail.com for publication in future newsletters!

- Courtney Helion, VP Publications

7. 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. **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 payment on paypal, **Don't pay us twice!**
Wait a day or more if you suspect your payment hasn't gone through!

If you have membership questions, please email Greg Lyman at
membership.ecdc@gmail.com.

Thank you!

- Greg Lyman, VP Membership

8. 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

9. 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/>.