



El Cerrito Democratic Club

June 2025 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/tZUpOCvqDkpEtH10GiVZ7NcegZqDI_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 Publication

2. Information and Zoom Link for the Tuesday, June 24, 2025 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.

June Meeting Agenda

6:20 pm – Assemble and Mingle, Zoom Logins

6:30 pm – Call to Order

6:31 pm – Review and Approve the June 2025 Meeting Agenda (**Action Item**)

6:33 pm – Review and Approve the May 2025 Membership Meeting Minutes (**Action Item**)

6:35 pm – Officer Reports:

President (Neil Tsutsui, absent)

- Please sign up to represent ECDC at our table on July 4th.
- Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/ECDC-July4th>

Executive VP (William Ktsanes)

Membership (Greg Lyman)

Media (Madeline Kronenberg)

Publications (Courtney Helion)

Treasurer (Ed Crowley)

Records (Leslie Reckler)

Programs (Ruthie Abelson Olivas)

6:45 pm – Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report (Champagne Brown)

7:00 pm – Program: “Get to Know Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton”

7:45 pm – Announcements (please limit to 2 minutes)

7:55 pm – Good of the Order

8:00 pm – Adjourn, in memory of Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover.

3. Neil Tsutsui, ECDC President



4. Minutes from the May 27th El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meeting

El Cerrito Democratic Club
General Membership Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM, Tuesday, May 27, 2025
(in person at Hana Gardens, 10860 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito; and via Zoom)

Call to Order

President Tsustui called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Review and Approve the May 2025 Meeting Agenda

On the motion of Joanna Pace and the second of Champagne Brown, the agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

Review and Approve the April 2025 Membership Meeting Minutes

On the motion of William Ktsanes and the second of Champagne Brown, the agenda was unanimously approved as presented. Michael Nye asks that his first and last name is included.

Officer Reports:

- President (Neil Tsutsui) Saturday October 25, 2025 is the Annual Dinner. SAVE THE DATE! The next meeting will be chaired by William Ktsanes.
- Executive VP (William Ktsanes) No report
- Membership (Greg Lyman) Club membership stands at 117 members.
- Media (Madeline Kronenberg) No report
- Publications (Courtney Helion) No report.
- Treasurer (Ed Crowley) Cash Balance = \$2,101.19 includes three new members. Outflows are: \$40 for rechartering and \$10 for Mechanics Bank monthly fees.
- Records (Leslie Reckler) No Report
- Programs (Ruthie Abelson Olivas) No Report

Democratic Party of Contra Costa County (DPCCC) Report (Champagne Brown)

- The last meeting was held in El Cerrito. CADEM will hold its state convention in Anaheim this weekend. There are candidates for state party chair, vice chair, secretary and controller. Only two seats are contested - state chair and secretary. Other positions are uncontested.
- The June meeting of the DPCCC is canceled because it falls on Juneteenth. They are looking for another date.
- **No on DA Becton Recall** Urging all to support the "No to the recall" campaign with your volunteerism and your money. dianabecton.org Join the Rapid Response Team that is willing to engage the public and tell the truth about her record.
- Paperwork has been received for rechartering and it will be reviewed.

Michael Nye District 1

- Anyone who is a delegate, please let the chair know and they can attend the party at the Marriot 8:00 - 9:30p.m.

- DPCCC is offering excellent training for anyone who is thinking of running. There will be other cycles where training is offered.

Vote on DPCCC-mandated changes to ECDC Bylaws

- Update XI of Bylaws to add “All Bylaw changes during the chartered period must be submitted to the Club Development Committee within 30 days of the Change”.
- Update XIII of Bylaws to change “California Democratic Party” to “California Democratic Party Chair”.

On the motion of Ed Crowley and the second of Dwight Merrill the bylaw changes were unanimously approved with no nays nor abstentions.

Select Alternate Club Representative to the DPCCC

On the motion of Neil Tsutsui and the second of Champagne Brown, Courtney Helion was unanimously approved as the alternate club representative to the DPCCC with no nays nor abstentions.

Vote to endorse “No” on DA Becton Recall

On the motion of Ed Crowley and the second of Buddy Akacic The club endorses a NO position on the DA Becton Recall. Approved with one abstention.

On the motion of Michael Nye and the second of Dwight Merrill, the club will donate \$100 to the “No on Becton Recall” campaign. The motion passes with 1 No and 2 Abstentions.

On the motion of Michael Nye and the second of Neil Tsustui, the ECDC will seek volunteers from its ranks to assist on the "No on Becton Recall “ signature campaign. The motion passes with 1 abstention.

Program: “An Informational Evening with Fire Marshall Chase Beckman”


<https://www.el-cerrito.org/175/Fire-Prevention>

Speaker: Fire Captain/Paramedic and Fire Prevention Officer Thomas Wade
El Cerrito Fire Department
(510) 215-4457

Defensible Space

New and existing businesses are inspected for defensible space. New digital format coming.

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>



INCIDENTS
PREVENT
PREPARE
OUR IMPACT
WHAT WE DO
JOIN CAL FIRE

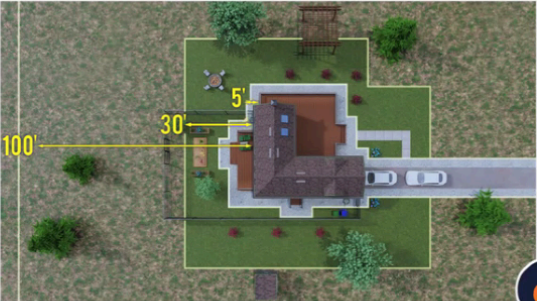
Search incidents and safety informati
SEARCH

Defensible Space

Practical ways to protect your home from wildfire.

The intensity of wildfire fuel management varies within the 100-foot perimeter of the home, with more intense fuels' reduction occurring closer to your home. Start at the home and work your way out to 100 feet or to your property line, whichever is closer. Learn more about the Defensible Space Zones below.

REQUEST A REAL ESTATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE INSPECTION



ASK CAL FIRE

Zone Zero is five feet from the house. Ember-proof zone.
 Zone 1 and zone 2 are 30 and 100 feet.

Zone Zero

[AB 38](#)

When selling a residential property in a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, documentation of a compliant defensible space inspection is required.

Home Hardening

Recommended, not required. But there could be insurance savings.

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/home-hardening>

Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps

There is a new severity zone map. El Cerrito Adopted the map as is.

<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones>

<https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=988d431a42b242b29d89597ab693d008>

Measure X Grants

Grants are available for firesafe projects.

Information is available on the County website.

[https://contracostacofpdcrm.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/\(S\(qygdvyhwyorb2urwjp13l5hv\)\)/SupportHome.aspx?sSessionID=](https://contracostacofpdcrm.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(qygdvyhwyorb2urwjp13l5hv))/SupportHome.aspx?sSessionID=)

Evacuation is done with the police department. Police enforce an evacuation.

<https://cwsalerts.com/know-your-zone/>

Announcements

El Cerrito Human Relations Commission in honor of Loving Day, will present the film, “The Loving Story,” free of charge, El Cerrito High School June 12, 2025 7:00 p.m. Open to all.

[Learn more here:](#)

Adjourn 7:50 p.m.

5. Get to Know Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton

Diana Becton is the District Attorney of Contra Costa County and one of fewer than 1% of African American women serving as a district attorney nationwide. Appointed in 2017 and twice elected, Becton previously served 22 years as a judge, including as Presiding Judge of the Contra Costa County Superior Court. She is the first woman, first African American, and first person of color to hold the office since its founding in 1850.

A statewide leader in criminal justice reform, Becton is committed to fairness, transparency, and public safety, with a focus on youth and community trust. She is a Past President of the National Association of Women Judges and Past Chair of the State Bar Council on Access and Fairness.

A graduate of Golden Gate University School of Law, Becton also holds a Master of Theological Studies from Pacific School of Religion. Her numerous honors include the 2025 MLK Jr. Visionary Leadership Award, the 2023 Woman of the Year for California’s 8th Congressional District, and the Thurgood Marshall Award from the National Bar Association. She serves on the California Victim Compensation Board and the boards of The Family Justice Center and West Contra Costa Youth Services Bureau.



photo credit: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/61123/Diana-Becton-District-Attorney-JPG?bidId=>

6. Stand with Becton! A Call to Action!

Your Support Is Essential to Stop the Recall

Your support is essential in the fight to stop a dangerous and unnecessary recall effort targeting Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton. As Democrats, we know that protecting progressive leadership, especially when it reflects the will and diversity of our communities and is critical to advancing justice and equity.

DA Becton made history as the **first African American and the first woman ever elected** as District Attorney in Contra Costa County's 175-year history. Under her leadership, the county has embraced smart criminal justice reforms that improve public safety, expand restorative justice, and support victims, all while reducing crime.

Now, those very values are under attack.

A group has received approval to begin collecting signatures for a recall. Their goal is to gather **72,000 valid signatures** to trigger a costly and unnecessary special election in 2026. This is more than a political tactic, it's an attempt to roll back the progress we've made toward a more fair and accountable justice system.

We need your help to stop this recall before it ever makes it to the ballot. Here's how you and your networks can take action:



Host a House Party

Bring together neighbors, friends, and community members to hear directly from DA Becton. These gatherings are powerful tools to cut through misinformation and share the truth about her leadership.



Join the Rapid Response Team

Visit www.dianabecton.org to sign up. Volunteers will attend public events to provide accurate information and show visible, peaceful support—**without confronting signature gatherers**.



Make a Contribution

Every dollar counts in this fight. Your donation helps fund outreach, education, and organizing efforts to ensure Contra Costa voters hear the truth before the other side spreads fear and distortion.

If you have any questions or would like to get more involved, please reach out at info@dianabecton.org.

The El Cerrito Democratic Club has always stood on the side of justice, truth, and inclusive leadership. Now is the time to stand with DA Becton—**say NO to the recall and YES to continued progress**.

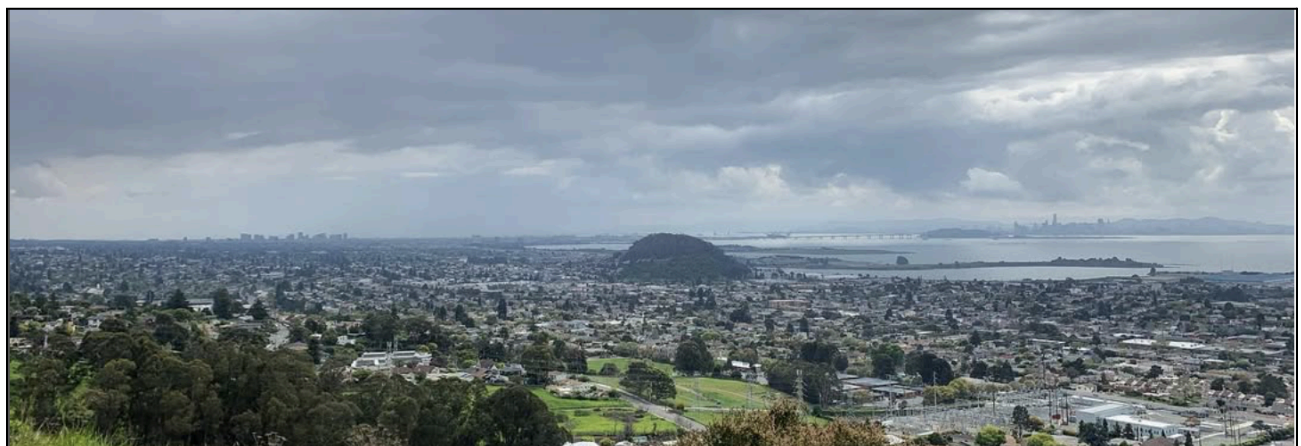
7. Follow up: An Informational Evening with Fire Captain/Paramedic and Fire Prevention Officer Thomas Wade

Thank you Officer Wade for coming to speak!

For those who wanted to follow up and know more about the fire prevention plan in El Cerrito please email: fpo@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Information websites:

El Cerrito	https://www.el-cerrito.org/175/Fire-Prevention
Defensible Spaces	https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace
Zone Zero	https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB38&showamends=false
Home Hardening	https://www.fire.ca.gov/home-hardening
Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps	https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=988d431a42b242b29d89597ab693d008
Measure X Grants	https://contracostacofpdcrm.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/(S(qygdvyhwyorb2urwjpl3l5hv))/SupportHome.aspx?sSessionID=



8. Future Events - *Mark Your Calendar!*

El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meetings and Events

ECDC June General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, June 24, 2025;
(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: Get to Know Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton

ECDC July General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, July 22, 2025;
(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 August General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, August 26, 2025;
(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 September General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, September 23, 2025;
(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 Annual October Dinner – 73rd Annual Dinner; Saturday, October 25, 2025. Location and time
TBD; no General Membership Meeting in October; special guest former California State
Controller and Gubernatorial Candidate Betty Yee, topic TBD

ECDC November 2025 General Membership Meeting – 6:30 pm, Tuesday, November 25, 2025;
(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 Annual Holiday Party – time, date and location TBD; no General Membership Meeting in
December

** There are no El Cerrito Democratic Club General Membership Meetings in October or
December; ECDC's Annual Dinner is in October and its Holiday Party is in December.*

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=c2sySEl5ZEplJl1lHVUM5bERCZGpEQOT09>.

Below is the ECDC E-Board Calendar through June 2025:

2025 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 Postal Mailed (to those who have paid extra for USPS delivery)	Monthly ECDC Newsletter Emailed (by 6:00 pm)	General Membership Meeting Date
Thursday, 6/5/2025	Sunday, 6/15/2025	Tuesday, 6/17/2025	Wednesday, 6/18/2025	Saturday, 6/21/2025	Tuesday, 6/24/2025
Wednesday 7/2/2025	Thursday 7/17/2025	Tuesday 7/22/2025	Wednesday 7/23/2025	Saturday 7/26/2025	Tuesday 7/28/2025
Thursday 8/7/2025	Thursday 8/14/2024	Tuesday 8/20/2025	Wednesday 8/21/2025	Saturday 8/23/2025	Tuesday 8/26/2025

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=cHRneSsxYkVnWWdTcTNQRnBBTmhzd09>

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

DPCCC General Membership Meeting - 7:00 - 10:00 pm, May 15th, 2025; 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 2025. **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.

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

Thank you!

- Greg Lyman, 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/>.