

Re: "Roses and Raspberries," March 12, 2012

Editor:

One of the basic tenets of the League of Women Voters is that voting is an integral part of our democratic society. We firmly believe that everyone's right to vote should be protected, and that the strength of our democratic government depends on the active participation of everyone.

We believe that people with convictions need to be reintegrated into society; part of that integration includes voting. The Secretary of State's decision to disenfranchise a whole group of people needed to be challenged, both because we believe it is wrong, and because the definitive answer on this question of voting rights needs to be made by the courts, not by an administrative order.

The legislature's purpose in enacting realignment was not simply saving money, but also the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into society while improving public safety outcomes. Realignment applies only to people sentenced for low-level, nonviolent crimes—exactly where there is the most potential for stopping the revolving door of recidivism. It includes community-based punishment with supervision and rehabilitation programs that are clearly not available in the state prison system.

You can find more information about these issues on our website at <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/publications/pr/index.html>.

Sincerely,