



Santa Cruz County Women's Commission

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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Thursday, September 18, 2025
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: County Government Building, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor Redwood Conference Room
PRESENT: Amanda Crowder (1st District), Paige Gordon (1st District), Brenda Rogers (2nd District), Suzanne Doty (3rd District), Allison Albert (3rd District), Rita Sanchez (4th District)
EXCUSED: None
ABSENT: Karina Moreno (4th District)
STAFF: Kaite McGrew (Commissions Manager)
GUESTS: Tricia Webber (County Clerk) and no members of the public were present.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Agenda Review

Meeting convened at 6:04 PM.

2. Approve May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion/Second: Sanchez/Rogers

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment: None

4. New/Continuing Business/Action Items:

4.1. Federal Legislation Impacting Voter Registration for Women

Webber presented information regarding recent federal legislation that could significantly impact voter registration processes, particularly for women. She discussed Federal Bill H.R. 22 and its companion Senate Bill S.128, collectively known as the SAVE (Safeguard American Voter Eligibility) Act, which would make major changes to the National Voter Registration Act. If enacted, the SAVE Act would require individuals to provide proof of citizenship each time they register or update their voter registration, including after moving, marriage, or divorce. Updates through the DMV or online systems would no longer be permitted without in-person verification. Webber noted that this would place a substantial burden on voters, especially those who have lost documents (such as through natural disasters), those who have changed their names, or those who must travel to obtain birth certificates or other records. She also emphasized that election officials could face criminal and financial penalties if found to be out of compliance, and that the measure represents an unfunded mandate that would add administrative costs without providing additional resources. The act would apply prospectively, not retroactively. Webber explained that H.R. 22 has already passed the House floor vote and is currently pending in the Senate Rules Committee, while S.128 remains in committee. Should the legislation advance, it would need to pass through additional committees before reaching the Senate floor and, eventually, the President. She further discussed Executive Order

14248, which relates to voter registration and voting processes. The order ties federal funding to state compliance, but enforcement is currently on hold due to three active lawsuits challenging its legality. As a result, there are no penalties at this time, pending a court ruling on its enforceability. Webber noted that California is a postmark state and that most Santa Cruz County voter registration updates currently occur through the DMV or online. Webber recently advocated with the Board of Supervisors to send a letter to all members of Congress opposing the SAVE Act due to its likely disenfranchising effects and administrative burdens.

4.2. CEDAW Board Presentation Debrief

Doty and Gordon summarized presenting the Commission's CEDAW recommended priorities and next steps to the Board of Supervisors at their September 9th meeting. The Board directed the CEO's office to return in November with a report on the cost and feasibility of the Commission's recommended next steps. The Commission will monitor the situation and consult if requested.

4.3. 2026 Trailblazers Awards Planning

Commission discussed planning for the 2026 Trailblazers Awards event, scheduled to take place via Zoom in March. Staff outlined the process for selecting recipients and hosting a virtual event.

Motion to establish an ad hoc *Trailblazers Awards Ceremony Planning Subcommittee* to begin planning in October.

Motion/Second: Gordon/Doty

Motion passed unanimously.

Gordon appointed Albert, Gordon, Crowder, Doty and Sanchez to serve on the subcommittee.

4.4. Recruitment for District Five Vacancies

Commission discussed outreach and applicant recruitment opportunities to fill District 5 vacancies. Crowder reported that the Women in Leadership in Diverse Roles (WILDR) expressed interest in assisting with recruitment efforts. Staff shared typical recruitment efforts the Commission can employ. Potential outreach opportunities discussed were the American Associate of University Women (AAUW), the Valley Women's Club, and the Democratic Women's Club. Staff will connect with District 5 staff to get an update on applicants.

5. Staff Report: None

6. Correspondence: None

7. Emerging Matters:

The CEO's office will attend the October meeting to discuss CEDAW and the County's Strategic Plan objectives. Staff will invite Sarah Marschall from the Justice Center to present at the November meeting.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Kaite McGrew, *Commissions Manager*