


**Agenda Item 7A**  
**League of Women Voters Civility Project Report**

**Democracy in Dialogue**

Empowering Our Communities  
Through Civil Civic Engagement



LWVC Convention 2015

**Democracy and the League**

The League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County believe that Civil Discourse makes Democracy work better, increases civic engagement, and empowers communities to find common ground on critical issues that need to be solved – if San Luis Obispo County is to survive and thrive now and in the future!

**What is Civil Discourse?**

Civil Discourse is courteous, constructive communication characterized by mutual respect, fairness, and attentive listening.

- The Best Practices of Civil Discourse**
- Leadership
  - Leadership
  - Leadership

## 10 Best Practices of Civil Discourse

- Lead by example: show respect to all in actions, body language, and speech.
- Encourage open spirited debates on all facts by contending parties.
- Provide adequate time for public comment.
- Listen actively. Thank speakers and, where appropriate, acknowledge public input.
- Speak truthfully without distortion.

## 10 Best Practices of Civil Discourse

- Never comment on motivation of a speaker.
- Promote discussion on merits of issues: evidence to support opinions and conclusions.
- Remind participants about Rules of Conduct before public meetings begin.
- Encourage respectful speech and discourage potentially slanderous, profane, or personal remarks.

## 10 Best Practices of Civil Discourse

- Regularly review laws-update rules and codes:
  - Codes of Ethics.
  - Codes of Conduct.
  - Robert's Rules of Order.
  - California's Brown Act.
  - Ordinances, Resolutions, and Pledges.

## Adopt Civil Discourse Resolution Pledge to follow Best Practices of CD:

- Respect the right of all people to hold different opinions.
- Avoid rhetoric intended to humiliate, malign, or question the motivation of those whose opinions are different from yours.
- Strive to understand differing perspectives.



### Adopt Civil Discourse Resolution Pledge to follow Best Practices of CD:

- Choose words carefully.
- Speak truthfully without accusation, and avoid distortion.
- Speak out against violence, prejudice, and incivility in all their forms whenever and wherever they occur.

### Why does Civil Discourse Matter?

- Civil Discourse promotes informed discussion of public issues essential for government bodies and citizens to make good decisions.

### Why does Civil Discourse Matter?

- Citizens and elected officials have a right to express their free speech, but in an environment that makes everyone feel safe and respected.

### Why does Civil Discourse Matter?

- We need to be the change we want to see if we are to increase civic engagement in government and attract more young people to government service.

### **Raise Awareness-Build Support for Civil Discourse ...**

- Observer Corps: attend-observe public meetings.
- Ambassador Corps: speak at Public Comment.
- 1/2 Day Civil Discourse Training Workshop.
- Parliamentary Procedures' Workshop.
- Civil Discourse Presentations by Request.
- Civil Discourse Speaker's Bureau.
- Civil Discourse Brochures, buttons, stickers.
- Civil Discourse curriculum for the schools.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2015-29**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE LOS OSOS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PLEDGING TO FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES OF CIVILITY AND CIVIL DISCOURSE IN ALL OF ITS MEETINGS**

**WHEREAS**, we, the General Manager, President, Directors of the Board, Advisory Committees, Standing Committees, and Staff of the Los Osos Community Services District in the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California, in order to ensure **civility** and **civil discourse** in all of our meetings, pledge our commitment to the following **best practices of civility** and **civil discourse**;

**WHEREAS**, we pledge our commitment to **respect** the right of all people to hold different opinions in all our meetings;

**WHEREAS**, we pledge our commitment to **avoid rhetoric intended to humiliate, malign, or question the motivation** of those whose opinions are different from ours in all our meetings;

**WHEREAS**, we pledge our commitment to **strive to understand** differing perspectives in all our meetings;

**WHEREAS**, we pledge our commitment to **choose words carefully** in all our meetings;

**WHEREAS**, we pledge our commitment to **speak truthfully** without accusation, and avoid distortion in all our meetings;

**WHEREAS**, we pledge our commitment **against violence** and **incivility** in all their forms whenever and wherever they occur in all our meetings.

**WHEREAS**, we commit ourselves to build a civil political community in which each person is respected and spirited public and political debate is aimed at the betterment of the Community of Los Osos and its people and not the disparagement of those with whom we disagree.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Manager, President, Vice President, Directors of the Board, Advisory Committees, Standing Committees, and Staff of the Los Osos Community Services District, in San Luis Obispo County, in the State of California, shall promote the use of and adherence to the principles of **civility** and **civil discourse** in conducting business with appointed and elected officials, staff, and citizens:

Upon motion of Director \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Director \_\_\_\_\_ and on the following roll call vote, to wit:

AYES: \_\_\_\_\_  
NOES: \_\_\_\_\_  
ABSENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing resolution is hereby passed, approved and adopted by the Board of Directors of the Los Osos Community Services District this 5<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
R. Michael Wright  
President, Board of Directors

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy A. Kivley  
General Manager and Secretary to the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael W. Seitz  
District Legal Counsel

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the Los Osos Community Services District, California, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Kudart, Administrative/Accounting Assistant III