

Camarillo event touts importance of voting



State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, D-Santa Barbara, speaks during a Tuesday event in Camarillo. TYLER HERSKO/THE STAR

County's female business leaders discuss diversity and activism

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Ventura County's female business leaders gathered with Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson to discuss voter activism, social issues and to celebrate the passage of Senate Bill 826 this week in Camarillo.

The Tuesday event, Using Our Collective Voice — Using Our Vote, featured several speakers and was held at the Wedgewood Banquet Center. Several organizations that advocate for women in business, including the American Association of University Women, the League of Women Voters, Vision 2020, Women's Economic Ventures and the National Association of Women

Business Owners' Ventura County chapter, co-hosted the gathering.

Jackson spoke for around 30 minutes and primarily discussed the process of getting SB 826 passed and the importance of voting.

Jackson, D-Santa Barbara, co-authored the bill with Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, D-San Diego.



Jackson

the end of 2019.

Corporations that fail to do so will receive a \$100,000 fine, with \$300,000 fines for subsequent violations.

Gov. Jerry Brown signed the bill into law on Sept. 30.

With SB 826 passed, Jackson was eager to attend the event to show her appreciation and continued support for the local businesswomen and activists who helped make the bill a law.

Adding women to corporate boards will help diversify a part of the workforce that is predominantly run by men, said Jackson, whose district includes parts of Ventura County. Besides the social gains, she said corporations with women on their boards of directors tend to perform better economically than those with exclusively male board members.

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"It's important to talk with the people who participated and reinforce the fact that it takes collaboration, determination and persistence to help change the culture we live in and put women in more positions of leadership," Jackson said in an interview. "(SB 826) is important because when we add meaningful numbers of women to corporate boards, those businesses are more productive and profitable. It adds to the entire economy by putting your best and brightest people on these boards."

Although Jackson said passing SB

826 was a primarily statewide effort, she added Ventura County's businesswomen and advocates played a valuable role in getting the bill signed.

Besides celebrating SB 826's passing, attendees also touted the importance of voter activism and discussed various social issues.

Booths and informational fliers about the event's co-hosts dotted the side of the venue, while speakers honed in on issues ranging from the wage gap between men and women and other forms of institutional sexism.

There also was a table for voter registration at the event. The deadline for California residents to register to vote is Monday.

Voting is a crucial part of democracy

and it is important to highlight groups that encourage residents to participate in the political process, according to event speaker Dawn Dyer, president of the Dyer Sheehan Group, a Ventura-based housing market analyst and land-use consultancy.



Dawn Dyer

"We want to excite, engage and make active the women and men who care about women's issues to use their voice and vote at the polls," Dyer said. "Democracy is a privilege and it cannot exist without an active and engaged electorate. We won't make it as a democracy unless we get a larger group of the population involved in the politi-

cal process."

Although Tuesday was a night for celebration, the event's focus on voter activism was just as important, according to Matty Park, a League of Women Voters member who attended the event. Park noted that institutional sexism was still a serious and pervasive issue and stressed that voters would need to continue advocating for social justice by voting in elections.

"There are things that work against women and the more equality we have the better it is for everybody," Park said. "Everyone here feels like it is important to get out and vote and fight for the things we think are important in our society. Advocacy groups (here) are one way to do that."