LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

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The VOTER

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President's Message

Happy Fall to all of our members and a sincere welcome to all of our new members. We are very glad to have you join us!

These last few months have been very busy as well as challenging for our League as well as for the National and State Leagues as well. This is the year for redistricting and we hope all of our members watch what is happening as these newly-designed districts will exist until 2031. Also, there are many bills that have been introduced that have the potential to limit voting or make voting less accessible in the future. Our mission of "Empowering voters. Defending democracy." comes into play if we see any aspects of these bills (near 20) as hurting voters or our democracy in any way.

These are difficult times for our democracy and we hope our members will be ready to advocate for what is right and fair for each and everyone of our Pennsylvania citizens regardless of party or zip code. I often think of the hardships endured by our suffragists and founding members of the LWV; and hope we can make them proud through the actions we take in insuring the right to vote and fairness in representation.

Shortly, you will be receiving a communication from me and the Board with a list of actions from which you can choose to help advocate for a better democracy. We hope you will find something comfortable in which to invest some of your precious time.

Enjoy this Fall season, the changing leaves, and the warmth of Thanksgiving. Hope to see you at the November and December Hot Topic Luncheons.

Thank you for all you do.

Mary Erdman, President

Hot Topics Lunch

New location – No stairs!

Hops at the Paddock

1945 Columbia St., Allentown,

Help Keep our Government Directory Up to Date!

The 2021 Government Directory is available in print and online. The online version is frequently updated to reflect changes in local municipality and school district information.

If you know of any upcoming or recent changes to any offices listed in the directory, please let me know. I can be reached at: cheryl.tetreau@gmail.com or you can send changes to: email@lwvlehighcounty.org.

Cheryl Winters-Tetreau, Government Directory

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 2 @ 7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Election Day

November 2nd is Election Day. Please get out and vote. You can find your pollingplace at https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov

November 8 @ 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Hot Topics Luncheon – November

Phil Armstrong, the Lehigh County Executive, will present the "State of the County 2021-2022" at the League's November Hot Topics Luncheon. Please RSVP for the event at https://www.lwvlehighcounty.org/events/

Location: Hops at the Paddock Restaurant, 1945 W Columbia Street, Allentown

November 16 – 17 @ noon – 4:00 pm

Ninth Annual Shale and Public Health Conference

This two day conference will be held virtually. It will feature new research on shale, public health impacts related to fracking, and practical applications. Register for the conference at www.shalepalwv.org/2021-shale-public-health-conference/

December 13 @11:30am – 1:00pm

Hot Topics Luncheon – December

Professor Chris Borick, of Muhlenberg College, will present "Election Trends and Midterm Challenges" at the League's December Hot Topics Luncheon. Please RSVP for the event at https://www.lwvlehighcounty.org/events/

Location: Hops at the Paddock Restaurant, 1945 W Columbia Street, Allentown

January 10 @ 11:30am – 1:00 pm

Hot Topics Luncheon – January

Catherine Hassack, the Executive Director of VAST, will present "An Introduction to the Work of the Valley Against Sex Trafficing (VAST) Organization" at the League's January Hot Topics Luncheon. Please RSVP for the event at https://www.lwvlehighcounty.org/events/

Location: Hops at the Paddock Restaurant, 1945 W Columbia Street, Allentown

Community Outreach

(Previously Voter Registration and Tabling)

Voter Registration and Tabling has changed our designation in Voter Services to ***Community Outreach*** to more accurately describe our mission and activities within the LWVLC. While registering voters remains a key purpose, our broader objectives include voter education and promoting civic engagement within the diverse Lehigh County community. Partnerships with local organizations are key to strengthening our community ties and the LWVLC is fortunate to have members involved in a variety of other groups. Ideas and suggestions for all aspects of community outreach are welcome and encouraged!

We were pleased to participate in numerous community events during September and October. Rally in the Valley, a free music festival dedicated to the celebration of recovery, brought a large crowd to the ArtsQuest Center, Bethlehem on September 12th. A great day of music, tasty food, and many good conversations with attendees.

The Parkland Community Library hosted *The Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of Municipal Elections* on September 28th, National Voter Registration Day. A small but engaged group had insightful questions, especially regarding the responsibilities of municipal government and different levels of the judiciary.

Other pre-election activities also included tabling events at the Bethlehem Area Public Library, the Bethlehem Rose Garden Farmers Market, and the Ripple Community Inc. in Allentown. The Lehigh County Office of the Public Defender invited the League to participate in their second Fall Community Outreach Day held on October 30th in Allentown. A perfect day to celebrate our new name, learn about other local organizations, and share information and resources with citizens.

As part of our on-going postcard initiative, *Voting is Your SuperPower* and *Local Elections are Key* postcards were distributed to local colleges, libraries, and organizations. Thanks to the Jewish Community Center, PA Career Link Lehigh Valley at St. Luke's, and Let's Play Books, Emmaus for passing the word about the importance of local elections.

Barbara Connolly and Cheryl Winters-Tetreau at a recent event.

Thanks to all for your continued support. Looking forward to many more community connections to come.

Barbara Connolly, Vice President Voter Services

Membership

BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!!!!! On our website, you now have the option to pay dues online instead of writing a check and mailing it to me. Many prospective members have viewed our website and asked for an online payment choice. There will be a small service change from PayPal if you choose this option.

As always, I will be sending out renewal membership forms in November reminding members to renew. Yearly dues need to be paid by the end of January.

As of Oct 15th, we have 87 members. Each month our membership keeps growing and growing. Recently, we had five new members join our League: Kathy Dunn from Allentown, Sheryl Haas-Reese from Zionsville, Candance from Kempton, Helen Schwartz from Allentown, and Merrily Weld from Allentown. We welcome them and hope they will be able to attend our Hot Topic Luncheons so we can meet them in person.

Margie Dunn

October Hot Topic Luncheon

Community Action Lehigh Valley

An Amazing Organization in our Community

If you did not attend, I recommend that you watch the recorded presentation on our YouTube channel (which you can access on our updated and more user-friendly website), given by Ms. Dawn Godshall, the Executive Director of CALV. This organization, which was founded by Alan Jennings, is a true life-saving gift for many who live in the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Godshall's presentation was just a summary of the many programs which fall under the umbrella of CALV and help so many groups from the homeless to even young girls.

You may recognize the **Sixth Street Shelter,** which has been helping the homeless in our community for 45 years. At the Sixth Street shelter entire families are helped, not just individuals. About 100 families are helped yearly. When living at the Sixth Street Shelter, families learn how to better manage their finances, receive job training and aid in finding jobs to sustain families.

Another widely known project is the **Second Harvest Food Bank** which helps many Lehigh Valley families with nutritious foods for people of all ages. This also includes many community gardens and nutrition programs that help people with food insecurities, receive healthy, nutritious foods.

Another amazing project is the **Seed Farm Program** which helps new farmers learn about farming through very practical instructional programs. This program also educates new farmers on how to maintain a farming business. As many local farmers are retiring, this is a program which encourages new, young farmers as they begin their farming businesses.

Finally, and certainly not the last of many programs is the **SHE** or the **She Has Everything Program**, which was developed for young girls.

First created by Alan Jennings, this project seeks to empower young girls in developing self-esteem which enables them to grow into confident young women. This program of empowerment is aimed at helping girls develop the confidence to form meaningful personal relationships and good decision-making skills. What a wonderful program that helps so may young girls become happy and confident young adults not dependent on others or young men to secure their own personal development and identity.

The Lehigh Valley is so fortunate to have the Community Action Lehigh Valley as a very valuable and important partner in making life better for so many of our residents. To find out more about CALV or to volunteer or donate go to: www.caclv.org .

Mary Erdman

Fall 2021 Voters Guide Distribution

Terri Purdy, Charles and Donna Barker with Voters Guides bundled for distribution.

Ten volunteers from LWVLC distributed 1,400 copies of the Fall 2021 Voters Guide across Lehigh County prior to the November 2 election. Printed to coincide with The Morning Call's online version, paper copies were delivered to 87 locations by our members.

Recipients of Voters Guides encompassed municipalities, libraries, LCCC, legislators, government agencies and offices, and nursing homes. Newly added drop sites included: the Boy Scouts USA, local post offices, diners, and grocery stores, and the Hispanic Center of Allentown.

One hundred copies were requested by and delivered to the Voters Registration Office, to be handed out to voters at the polls on November 2.

Special thanks to Michelle Graupner for compiling and editing the Voters Guide for Lehigh County, and to The Morning Call for donating the paper copies to our League. Thanks also to the Emmaus Library for accommodating our volunteers by providing a conference room to serve as our distribution hub.

The following members delivered copies to designated zones around the county: Pat & Burke Swan, Marianne Phillips, Rochelle Kaplan, Kathy Stagl, Terri Purdy, Molly Faust, Mary Erdman, and Barb Connolly.

Donna and Charles Barker, Publications Distribution Chairpersons

LWVPA Update- Subpoena for Voter Information

On September 15th, the Republican members of the Pennsylvania State Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee subpoenaed Veronica Degraffenreid, the Acting Secretary of State, to obtain private voter information of the nine million voters in Pennsylvania. The subpoena demands the release of every voter's name, address, birthdate, driver's license number, and partial social security number. Senator Cris Dush, the Chair, stated that this information was needed in order to verify voters' identities. He claimed that he has received "questions regarding voter identity" in the 2020 elections, so this information was necessary to investigate those questions.

However, neither he nor the senators who voted to issue this subpoena have given any factual basis for these "questions." Moreover, numerous court rulings and House and Senate hearings regarding the 2020 elections have not uncovered any evidence of fake voter registration or fake ballots that would indicate a need for this information. The committee has not indicated how they plan to use this information, and whom they plan to share it with is still unknown. It is unclear whether taxpayer dollars will be used to fund this sham review of voter information.

In response, Pennsylvania's Attorney General, Josh Shapiro filed a lawsuit challenging the subpoenas. Attorney General Shapiro has requested the Commonwealth Court declare the subpoenas invalid and unenforceable because they violate the constitutional privacy rights of registered voters. He argues in the lawsuit that the Committee's subpoena demands Pennsylvanians' constitutionally protected information without providing a reasonable justification for needing the information. According to the lawsuit, the Committee's concerns about the integrity of the 2020 and 2021 elections are based on false, partisan narratives that have been repeatedly disproven. Thus, there is no legitimate justification for requesting this personal information.

The lawsuit also notes that the Committee has not implemented the necessary security protocols to ensure that Pennsylvanians' personal information cannot be misused by any third-party company. According to Attorney General Shapiro, Senator Dush, has not revealed how voters' personal data will be protected or even the name of the private company that will house and analyze the information.

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, Common Cause, Make the Road PA, and several Pennsylvania voters have filed a motion to intervene in this lawsuit to protest the violation of voters' privacy rights. If these organizations are successful, it means that their attorneys would be permitted to participate in all court proceedings.

In the press release announcing the motion to intervene, Terrie Griffin, President of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania said, "With this sham election review, Pennsylvania legislators are intentionally injecting discord into our election process and threatening the personal privacy of millions of voters." She added, "Pennsylvania's 2020 Election was executed safely and securely. This election review is a blatant attempt to weaken voters' trust in our election system while exposing their sensitive data to possible exploitation and manipulation. Voters' private data must be protected."

Vic Walczak, the legal director of the ACLU stated in the press release, "When Pennsylvanians register to vote, they have a reasonable expectation that the state will safeguard their personal data…In fact, they have a right to privacy in their personal information under both the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions that protects their data. Senate leaders are potentially exposing nine million Pennsylvanians to an increased likelihood of identity theft and financial fraud, while also creating dangerous new vulnerabilities in the state's election systems."

Update: On October 26, 2021, the Commonwealth Court ruled in favor of the League of Women Voters, ACLU PA, Common Cause, and Make the Road PA and granted their motion to intervene in the case.

More information about the case, *Commonwealth v. Dush et al* is available at aclupa.org/Dush.

Rochelle Kaplan
Member LWVPA Government Policy Team

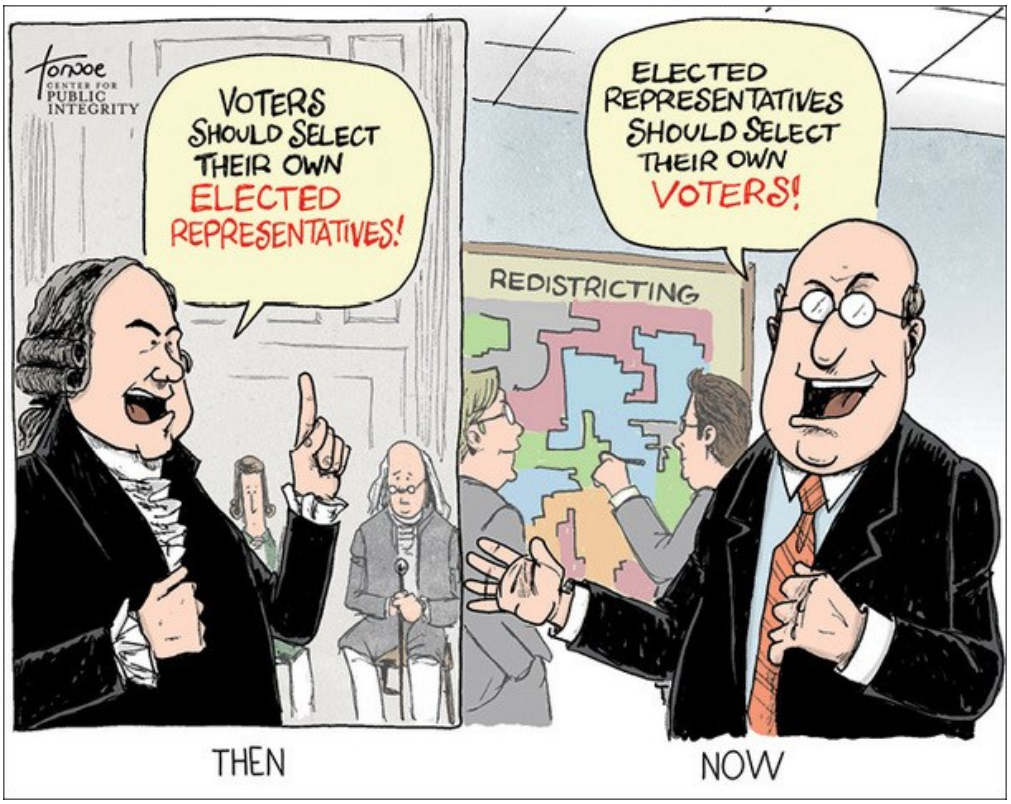
The Redistricting Process
An Exercise of Function or Folly?

Last year, the decennial US Census was held; due to Covid and lawsuits filed by the Trump presidency, we have to hope that the most accurate job we could expect was completed. The resulting statistics have been released by the US Census Bureau to the states, and now the process of redistricting is about to enter its final phase. What is happening and when will we have our new maps?

The date when the maps need to be finalized is **January 24th.** Between now and then, the US Congressional map, the House legislative districts, and the Senate districts will need to be completed, reviewed, and, in the case of the US Congressional map, the Governor will accept or veto the map as he sees fit.

Since 2016, Fair Districts has been working to change the method and take legislators out of the process by creating an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. These efforts failed, but not because of a lack of effort or support. FDPA had over 100,000 Pennsylvania citizens and half of all municipalities join us in asking for an independent commission. In fact, at one point, FDPA had the support of over half of the entire General Assembly. And what was the result? Because of the way in which our government is set up and the archaic rules which govern legislative action, FDPA and the LWV were completely ignored by leadership, and our efforts died in committee, or did not even make it that far.

This is the redistricting process at present: *The Legislative Reapportionment Commission* (five members) draws the 50 State Senate districts and the 203 State House districts. This Commission consists of the two Republican and the two Democratic Party leaders. The fifth person, who could not be agreed upon by the four, was chosen by the PA Supreme Court - Chairman Mark Nordenberg, who appears to be open to input from citizens and hopefully will skillfully arbitrate the demands of each party. Their website is easy to navigate and contains a good deal of information which can be found at: www.paredistricting.com. (continued on page 7).



Redistricting Process (continued from page 6)

Now for the new US Congressional map. The responsibility of redrawing the new map falls initially to the House and Senate *State Government Committees.* They are responsible for reducing our 18 Congressional Districts to 17 and, ideally, maintaining fairness for the voters. There are many questions which are not easily answered regarding the work of these two committees. We don't know if these two bodies are working together at all. Both promised openness and transparency; yet, in order to access a website (or lack thereof), you need to go to the Republican House Caucus site or the individual page of Sen. David Argall. Most Pennsylvanians would be unaware of this. This is very disappointing.

Additionally, a 30-day review period should be allowed once a new map is proposed; however, so far, community involvement has not been promoted or facilitated. Many people agree that no matter how good an individual mapper may be, if they are not familiar with the locality which is being drawn, the result may be a map that voters, and even legislators, find unfair. Local citizens' input is crucial! Bottom line- once the maps are completed and the review process begins, please take the time to read them, and let your feelings be known. Whether yours is a positive or (especially) a negative reaction.

Even though FDPA was not successful in calling for an Independent Commission (seven states including CA have them), be assured that thousands will be watching this process very closely. The LWV and FDPA have been focused on redistricting for nearly five years and we have learned a great deal about this process. We will advise you when the maps are completed and when and how you may be able to comment. Please do so. The maps should be fair for voters and not be gerrymandered. As we have been stating for some time, "Not red, not blue, just fair!" The maps created will be in place until the year 2031! This is a time for action, or reaction. Stay tuned…

Mary Erdman

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

League of Women Voters of Lehigh County
P.O. Box 3275
Allentown, PA 18106

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership dues include membership in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania (LWVPA) and a subscription to the local and state *Voter.*

League dues and contributions are not tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

Contributions to the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF) are tax-deductible.

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all citizens. Voting members must be at least 16 years old.

ANNUAL DUES 2021

$70 individual $105 household $25 full-time student

$35 if 35 years or younger

Please make check payable to LWVLC and mail to:

LWVLC
c/o Margie Dunn
8411 Carpet Road
New Tripoli, PA 18066