LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEHIGH COUNTY

March/April 2022 Volume 69, Issue 5

The VOTER

Inside Articles

Upcoming Events	2
March Hot Topic	2
Redistricting Update	3
February Hot Topic	4
Spotlight:	5
Community Outreach	7
Government Directory	6
Voters Guide	7
Publication Distribution	7
Membership	7
Advocacy Report	8
DEI Report	9

President's Message

Dear League Members,

As we go to press this week, we now have the final PA House, PA Senate and the US Congressional District Maps.

We have seen many examples of why we should have an "independent citizens redistricting commission," and remove the politicians from drawing their own districts lines. Harrisburg knows the routine- every ten years, based on the US Census, reapportionment and redistricting takes place. And here we are down to the wire and in "overtime" of this "game" which our politicians play to get their best maps.

No matter how late they arrive, we actually must celebrate these maps as the most fair in over 20 years. Why? Because of League members like you, and members of Fair Districts PA (part of the LWV), Common Cause, The Committee of Seventy and others, there were many thousands of eyes on the redistricting process this time. Once the preliminary House and Senate maps were released, over 5,000 of you submitted testimony on how these maps could be improved, and the Legislative Reapportionment Commission (LRC) actually listened!

Under the dedication and fairness of Chairman Mark A. Nordenberg, maps were created that are fairer and allow for more chances of minority representation than *ever* before. They are not perfect and they will never be perfect; but now that we are almost ready to embrace them, we need to congratulate ourselves for the meetings, presentations, letters-to-the-editor, postcards, lobbying in-person, by phone or email, that you all completed to inform our legislators that we were watching and listening for fair maps this time.

Our League mission now is to educate, inform, register and motivate our citizens to get out the vote (GOTV) in these new districts. As part of embracing the National and State League Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies, we need to serve those communities which need our services the most: our youngest voters, our minority voters, and our older voters. Come join us in activities that will help our community to embrace these maps and participate in our mission of "Empowering Voters!"

Stay tuned for some opportunities to get involved. Thank you all for your hard work. We have learned that Democracy is not a spectator sport. Our work must continue as new bills emerge that will attempt to limit access to voting and bypass the legislative process through the use of constitutional amendments. Stay tuned, and Happy Spring!

See article on the new maps and learn how you can find your new district(s).

Yours in League,

Mary Erdman

Upcoming Events

March 14 @11:30am – 1:00pm
Hot Topics Luncheon – March
Leah Purdy, Regulatory Specialist for Resource Environmental Solutions (RES), will present, "Habitat Creation for Native Beneficial Insects."

April 11 @ 11:30am – 1:00 pm
Hot Topics Luncheon – April
Bob Elbich, Lehigh County Commissioner-At-Large, will present "Massive Shale Gas Transport Through Lehigh County."

May 2 @ 12:00am – 5:00pm
Last day to Register to Vote before the 2022 Primary Election

May 10 @ 12:00am – 5:00pm
Last day to Apply for a Mail-in or Civilian Absentee Ballot before the 2022 Primary Election

May 17 @ 7:00am – 8:00pm
Primary Election Day

March Hot Topics Program: Insects

The March Hot Topic will be presented by Leah Purdy, who will tell us about "Habitat Creation for Native Beneficial Insects." Leah is a horticulturalist, a landscape architect, and is currently working on her master's degree in Natural Resource Stewardship in Environmental Restoration.

Leah has worked in the field of horticulture for the past 15 years, which gave her plenty of facetime with insects. Though not formally trained in entomology, she dug into the subject while working at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, and became their authority on gardening practices that encourage and protect beneficial insects. Leah will talk to us about the decline of insect populations, why insects matter, and how we can help stem the decline with gardening tips and plant selection.

Spring is on its way, so there is no time like the present to begin planning updates to your garden that will make it a more insect-friendly habitat. Please join us for Leah's presentation at our Hot Topics Luncheon on March 14 at 11:45 am. Our March meeting will be virtual again, so keep an eye on your email inbox for our Zoom invitation.

Terri Purdy, Special Projects

Redistricting Update - Fair Districts PA

As we go to press, we are waiting to see if the challenges to the House Map results in any changes; however, we don't think so. But, we do have a new US Congressional District map (included) that has not changed for the Lehigh Valley, but has taken some of the Monroe County part of District 07 and added all of Carbon County. The district had to be made bigger to account for losing a congressional district due to population changes. For more information go to our website:

www.lwvlehighcounty.org

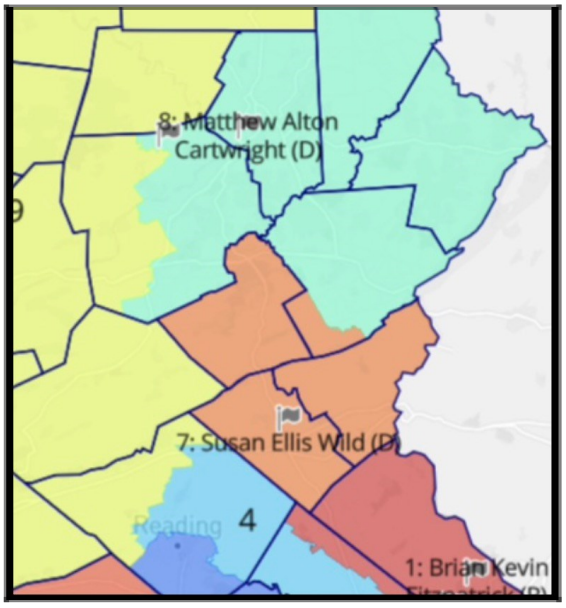
And then click on "Fair Districts."

Under "Redistricting Update" you can choose from a number of links to maps that will show you exactly the district in which you live and how it has changed. One of the easiest is the *Spotlight* tool which allows you to enter your address and see your old and then new House and Senate districts. Try each of them and dig as deep as you want into the boundaries and criteria of each new district.. These maps are not perfect, but they are much more fair than the maps of the last 20 years. (These links have also been posted on our Facebook and Twitter accounts as well).

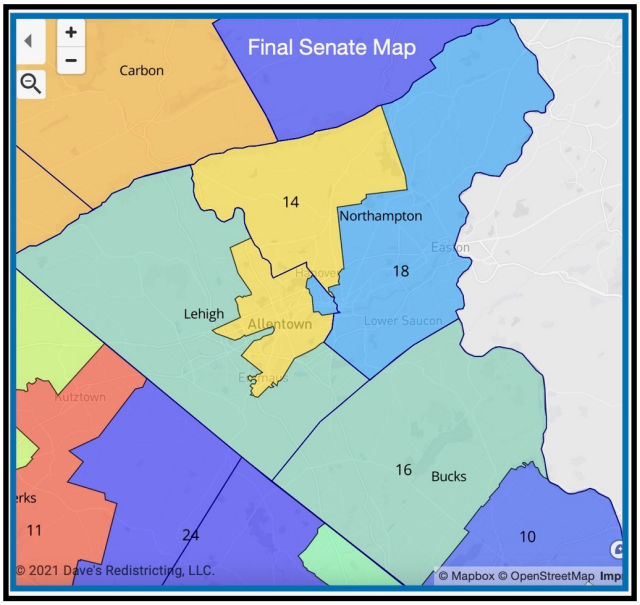
Enjoy!

Mary Erdman President

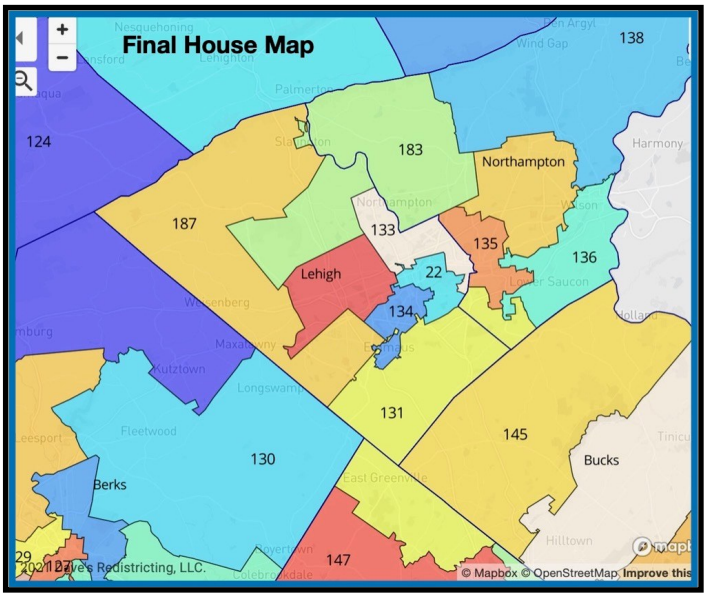
New Congressional District 7—tan color



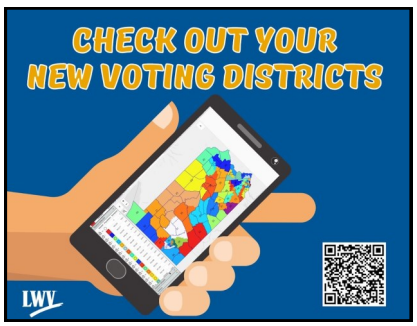
PA Senate Map



PA House Map



You can also use this QR Code to find your Voting Districts.



February Hot Topic Recap:Drug and Alcohol Issues in Lehigh Valley

This February we had two very important and different professionals speak to us about addiction and overdoses in the City of Allentown. First was EMS specialist, Shannon Scoble, who is employed by the City of Allentown. Shannon explained that they treat these individuals who overdose with Naloxone or Narcan® as it is commonly known (which families can get if a family member has an opioid addiction). Shannon gave us a report on the number of overdose calls since 2019 in the City of Allentown:

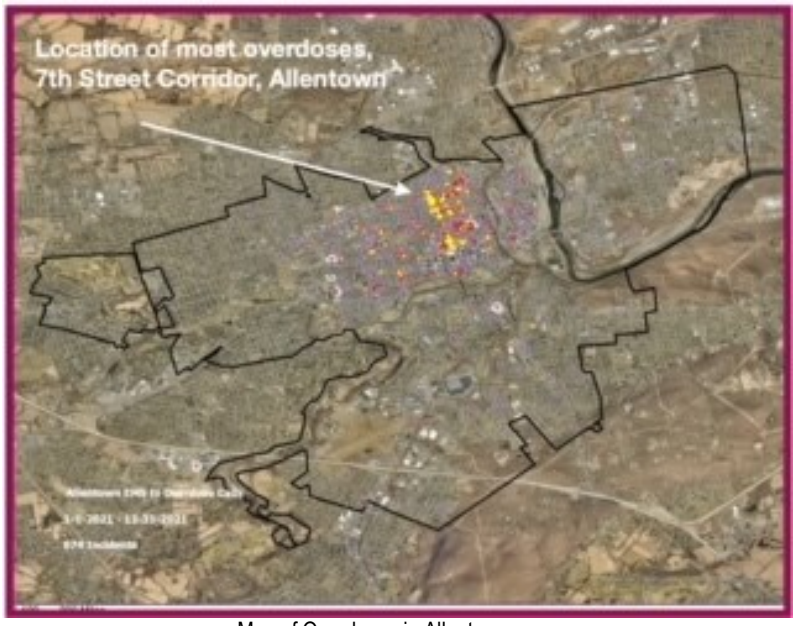
2019 - 419 overdoses

2020 - 569 overdoses

2021 - 1,101 overdoses.(445 heroin/ 181 K2 (synthetic marijuana)/ 475 ingestion/poisoning (often alcohol)

2022 - 119 overdoses, so far. (55 heroin/ 12 K2/ 52 ingestion/poisoning)

The map shows that most of the overdoses occur in what is referred to as the "7th Street Corridor," yet, as you can see, overdoses occur in other parts of the city as well. It is important to note that not everyone who overdoses is from Allentown; people come to the city to buy drugs from surrounding municipalities or as they pass through the Lehigh Valley. Yet, it is the City of Allentown EMS Department that responds. Shannon spoke about "compassion fatigue" which can happen when you experience so many overdoses. Shannon was very open and transparent about the effects of such work on First Responders and we certainly have gained an appreciation for their work.



Map of Overdoses in Allentown

Bill Stauffer, the Executive Director of Pennsylvania Recovery Organization Alliance (Pro-A) followed Shannon by describing addiction and how it should be treated. Bill explained that addiction is a disease of the brain (indicated by the AMA as a disease since 1987) that affects the area of judgement, behavior and motivation. Bill is a person in long-term recovery, over 35 years, and has spent many years running treatment facilities and working with people in addiction and recovery.

He cites that one in every three families is affected by this disease and has worked very hard making sure that treatment for addiction is covered by insurance plans. The National Parity Act requires any insurance plan that provides for med-surgical coverage and behavioral health coverage must also cover treatment for addiction, which is needed by so many families these days.

Recent research indicates that addiction needs a longer period of treatment. Studies show that a minimum of 90 days is necessary to help heal the brain followed by recovery services and support. Both Lehigh and Northampton Counties have committed to such recovery services. Once a person is sober for five years there is an 85% chance that they will remain sober for life and recovery services can help support those in early recovery make it to that five-year mark.

The good news, according to Bill, is that there are presently over 23 million people in successful recovery throughout the United States. And when people are in successful recovery, they are motivated to do wonderful things as they appreciate that second chance at life.

If you know someone who is need of help from drug or alcohol issues, start by contacting the Lehigh County Department of Drug and Alcohol. I have included a QR code with the Lehigh County department information. Both the family member and the family need help to navigate addiction issues. We are grateful to Shannon and Bill for giving us a realistic look at addiction, overdoses, and the need for effective treatment.

If you think a family or friend may have an issue, don't wait, get them help as soon as possible.

Mary Erdman, President

QR Code

Spotlight

Candance Herrman

I am writing this spotlight about my best friend, my children's godmother, and a new member of our League as of 2021.

Candance and her husband moved from Philadelphia to a farm in Kempton in 1993, which meant my kids got to spend weekends at the farm camping in their giant teepee, sleeping in their chicken coop turned fabulous guest house furnished with antiques, or traipsing through their stream with their dogs. They also got to visit with the 35 rheas and one emu that Candance and her husband were raising.

Growing up, Candance was a "military brat" and spent her early years moving from place to place with her family. They settled in the Baltimore area where Candance went to high school. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Education from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). From there she joined the Peace Corp and spent two years in Mombasa, Kenya where she managed a sheltered workshop for physically handicapped adults who made jewelry from natural fibers, copper, and brass. Candance returned from Kenya and settled in Philadelphia where she earned a Masters in Social Services at Bryn Mawr College.

Candance is an animal lover, as shown by the fact that she raised rheas. She currently has a passel of dogs, cats and chickens. She came by this love of animals honestly, as she grew up with cats, dogs, horses, goats and a pet monkey. When you meet her, ask her about the time a goat went rampaging through her house and upset a gallon of paint!

I am so pleased that Candance was attracted to the work our League does and that she has joined us as a member.

Terri Purdy, Special Projects

Doris Glaessmann

I am shining the spotlight on a longtime member of our league, Doris Glaessmann. Doris is a native of the valley having grown up in Northampton. She joined our league in the early eighties – she isn't sure of the exact date – and has served since 1993 as a chairperson and a current member of the Budget Committee.

In a professional capacity, Doris has served as the Clerk of Courts of Lehigh County, a position to which she was elected three times before retiring in 1995. From there she was appointed to the Lehigh County Election Board where she served for 25 years before retiring at the end of 2021. She has held numerous executive positions in professional organizations, to include the presidency of the PA State Association of Prothonotaries and Clerks of Courts.

Doris has been very active in the community. She has been a longtime member of Quota International working in many committee positions to include serving as a President of the local Chapter of Quota International and as a Governor of the Second District of Quota International Inc. She has been a council person for St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church and a den mother and secretary for Cub Scout Pack 140. Doris and her husband Edward (deceased in 2014) have raised two sons.

Doris is enjoying reading during retirement. She continues her volunteering by crocheting items for donation to the Good Shepherd Pediatric Rehab center and St. Luke's VNA Hospice.

Like me, Doris believes that a day isn't complete without a bite of chocolate. Longtime league members might remember that when we used to hold membership dinners, Doris could be counted on to bring dessert - her chocolate fountain machine was always a hit.

Molly Faust, Past President & DEI Representative

The **Spotlight** feature is a new addition to The Voter. In each subsequent issue, we'd like to profile one of the members. As our membership grows, and as our face- to- face meetings go virtual, we'd like to keep in touch with one another through these brief interviews.

So, if you would like to nominate a League member to be "Spotlighted", or if you would like to be "Spotlighted" yourself, please let one of our Board members know.

Donna Barker, Editor, The VOTER

Community Outreach

At the LWV, we understand the power of partnering with local organizations and community groups. We are fortunate in Lehigh County to have many groups willing to assist our efforts to register and educate voters. In the coming months, we will be reaching out to even more community groups amid the challenge of new legislative and congressional district maps.

Our league has been engaged in conversations with the Lehigh County Board of Elections to consider strategies to increase voter turnout in the City of Allentown and collaboration to provide voter education and resources. According to Diane Gordian, Deputy Chief of Elections, and Alexandra Sierra, Alternate Language Coordinator, two specific issues affect voter turnout in Allentown : lack of information and lack of knowledge. Especially for new and/or diverse voters, navigating the process can be daunting.

One of our first initiatives will be our participation in a Zoom seminar with the BOE during March. Community organizations will be invited to review the basics of voting - how/when/where to vote and how to access voter and candidate information. The seminar will be recorded and available online. We are also looking at additional partnering opportunities, including outreach to neighborhood-based groups.

The Lehigh County Board of Elections held a National Poll Worker Recruitment Day on January 25th, 2022. The LWVLC was pleased to be able to spread the word about this event through our website events page and social media. The BOE is in great need of poll workers for the May election, especially for Spanish language poll workers and interpreters in Allentown and the greater Lehigh Valley.

Community Outreach is an important aspect of our LWV mission. We need all hands on deck in the coming months! If you are willing to help with any of our efforts, please contact me at email@lwvlehighcounty.org.

Barbara Connolly
Community Outreach

Spring 2022 Voters Guide

The Voters Guide for the primary election is set to be published by *The Morning Call* on Thursday, April 14, 2022. The primary election is to be held on May 17, 2022, pending any court proceedings that may delay the election.

The PA State League has reached out to candidates running for office to participate in the online questionnaire, which will be available on vote411.org. The Guide will include state and federal races covering Lehigh and Northampton County. Links to vote411 and the current edition of the Voters Guide can be found on our website under Voter Services.

Michelle Graupner, Voters' Guide Chair

Publications Distribution: You can help.

Longer days and warmer temperatures can only mean one thing- it's time for the LCLVW Government Directory to be distributed throughout the county! Last year, 2560 copies were delivered or mailed to 105 recipients by our members.

We have a comprehensive list of organizations and offices, and we need your help delivering stacks of 20 pamphlets to each one. This is a great opportunity for members to be directly involved in accomplishing the League's work.

The Government Directory is a convenient resource for Lehigh County citizens, providing government officials' names and contact information and the election year calendar, as well as county school district information.

Please consider joining as on a TBA date in March to help with this important community outreach event. Email Charles & Donna Barker to sign up.

Donna Barker email: lissabrad@AOL.com

Charles Barker email: charlesabarker1953@gmail.com

Membership Report

Our membership drive is officially over.

Thank you for renewing your membership! Also, a big thank you for all our members who contributed to the Education Fund. You donated almost $1500! We will definitely put the money to good use. The cost of printing had increased over the last 2 year along with our Zoom charges and website management fees.

Look for the 2022 Members Handbook which should be available at our next in-person Hot Topics Luncheon (TBA).

As of February, we have 75 members in our League. We have had a number of people join through our updated website. Please tell your friends, neighbors, relatives , and colleagues to check out our website to view all the League programs.

Let's spread the word about our wonderful League.

Margie Dunn , Membership Chair

Advocacy Report

Much has been going on in Harrisburg and in our courts since the last VOTER. Below is a review of what has transpired:

Legislating by Constitutional Amendment.

There are several pieces of legislation amending the Pennsylvania Constitution which could substantially change voting in Pennsylvania. Constitutional amendments must be passed in two succeeding legislative sessions and then they go on the ballot for voters. The governor has no role in approving or vetoing constitutional amendments. The League will be issuing a position statement opposing the use of constitutional amendments in this manner. In the meantime, here are the specific constitutional amendments that the League is watching closely:

HB 38 would create judicial districts from which Commonwealth, Superior Court and Supreme Court judges would be elected. This constitutional amendment has already passed for the first time in the 2020-2021 legislative session. Should it be passed a second time in 2022, it can appear on the ballot in 2022 or 2023.

HB 2207 eliminates the Legislative Reapportionment Commission (LRC) and replaces it with a commission of 11 individuals picked by the General Assembly and County officials. The General Assembly would have the final say on any maps approved by the commission. In addition, the General Assembly could change the maps that are approved this year.

HB 1596 provides for the election of secretary of state which is now an appointed position, requires an election audit by the auditor general (currently the Department of state conducts an election audit), and enshrines voter ID into the Pennsylvania Constitution.

SB106 changes the way in which the lieutenant governor is elected, calls for auditing of elections by the auditor general, and adds a voter ID requirement. In addition, it limits the governor's power to issue regulations.

Redistricting Update

Congressional Redistricting

On February 23, SCOPA selected a new congressional map that closely resembles the current one. Moreover, the Court announced that it will not move the date of the May 17 primary, opting instead to adjust some of the deadlines for candidates to obtain sufficient signatures to appear on the ballot. Lehigh and Northampton counties remain in the seventh congressional district. To view the new congressional map, you can go to this website.

https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::86ccc0c3-b1ae-4209-b1c2-15dfd28b4da8

Legislative Redistricting

On February 4, the LRC approved the State House and Senate maps by a vote of 4-1. This also started a 30-day period in which "aggrieved" individuals can file exceptions with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania (SCOPA.) As of February 22, only two exceptions have been filed regarding the maps. The deadline to file exceptions is March 7. Thereafter, the Supreme Court will issue a ruling on the maps.

Litigation Update

Bonner vs. Degraffenreid

On January 28, the Commonwealth Court found that the no-excuse/mail-in ballot provision of Act 77 was unconstitutionally enacted as a statute. The Court ruled that changing the way in which people vote had to be accomplished through the constitutional amendment process, not by regular legislative action. An appeal was immediately taken to SCOPA. With the appeal, the Commonwealth Court's order is automatically stayed — meaning no-excuse/mail-in voting should remain legal until SCOPA issues a ruling. However, on February 16, the Commonwealth Court issued an order stating that it is likely that SCOPA will invalidate Act 77; therefore, the original order will go into effect on March 15. Arguments before SCOPA are scheduled for March 8.

Continues on page 9

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report

Our League has been participating for the past year in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) task force set up by the PA State League. The LWVPA Equity team has met monthly, sometimes bimonthly, via Zoom to map out work that needs to be done in this area. Currently, a subcommittee has been drafting learning modules to explain the importance of DEI to local leagues and how to go about incorporating it in the work we do.

Adopting the DEI policy is important. It is a first step to building equity because it provides a framework and a common language for all League work and policy making, just as the LWV nonpartisan policy provides a framework for civic engagement. DEI Policy is intended to become fully integrated in your local League's culture and practices.

Our League has already begun the first step in the process by adopting the DEI language in our bylaws. This was done last year by a unanimous vote of the membership at our 2021 annual meeting. The board has also participated in a questionnaire looking at our League operations. Going forward, we are encouraged to look at how our League operates, and to view all our projects through "the DEI lens." Which means that we will ask ourselves the question, "Are we diverse, equitable and inclusive in the work that we do?" It is a different way of assessing the success of our projects.

The equity team encourages Leagues to develop partnerships, to be inclusive of all organizations when we reach out to the community, and to join the equity committee for new resources, ideas, and support. Meetings are the first Monday evening of the month.

Molly Faust, Past President & DEI Representative

Advocacy Report (continued from page 8)

Election Reform Legislation

HB 1800 is a major revision of the election code (150 pages) providing among other changes to the election code – pre-canvassing of ballots, the elimination of drop boxes, additional security protocols, and voter ID. This legislation has been on the House calendar for a vote since January. It is expected that if it passed the House and Senate, Governor Wolf would veto it.

Keep your eyes on our website, Facebook page and Twitter for alerts and updates!

Rochelle Kaplan, Secretary and Voter Services Director for LWVPA

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 2022

$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