

The Voter

FALL 2023

newsletter from the
League of Women Voters
of Bucks County



Message from the President

In early September on a hot and humid Saturday morning, nearly 60 members of our League came together at the Northampton Library to learn about our plans for the coming year and to sign up to help empower voters and defend democracy.

Every committee chair rose in turn to outline the plans they have for the year, and the list was impressive. We have five advocacy teams following legislation on important issues and planning educational programs on their topics for the coming year. We have volunteers reaching out to seniors across Bucks County to register those who have recently moved and to explain the intricacies of Mail-In Ballots. Registration of young voters will rev up at county wide high schools in the spring.

We have tabling events scheduled for fairs and community events throughout the fall to bring our message to a wide variety of voters. Our printed Voters Guide and online Vote411 services are on track to provide important information as we gear up for the fall election. And our Speakers Bureau is presenting programs to groups across the county.

Many of us are familiar with the quote attributed to Doylestown-native, Margaret Mead: *Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has.*

We, as members of the League of Women Voters of Bucks County, are trying to change our world by empowering voters and defending our democracy.

If you would like to help, contact us at LWVBucksPA@gmail.com.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

Last day to Register to Vote:
October 23, 2023

Last Day to Request a mail-in or
Absentee Ballot:
October 31, 2023

Municipal Election:
November 7, 2023

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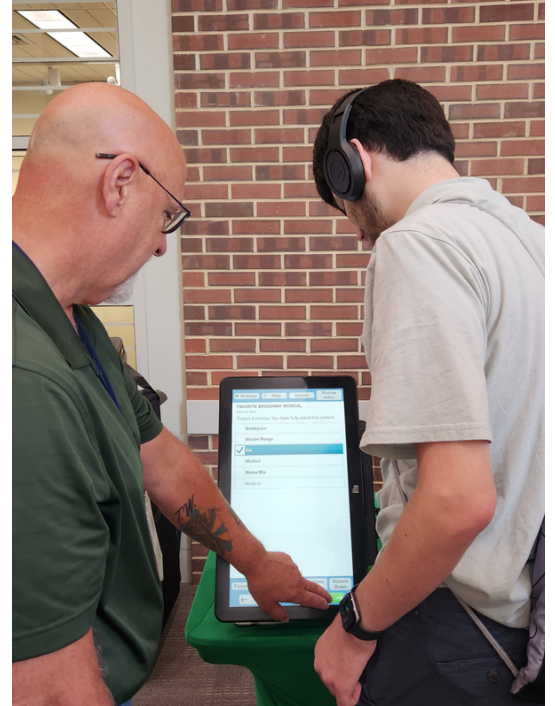
Jean Weston
President

LWVBC - empowering voters

VOTING IS YOUR SUPERPOWER, ELECTION SIMULATION

by Sandra Kerr

Over 125 young adults and students with disabilities participated in the “Voter is Your Superpower” voter education events held on August 28th and September 11th. Participants had the opportunity to register to vote, check their voter registration status, experience the voting process and learn about their rights as a voter. The events were a partnership between LWVBC and the Bucks County Center for Independent Living. The Bucks County Board of Elections set-up a voting simulation and guided the participants through the voting process, from checking in on the electronic poll-book to inserting the ballot into the ballot scanner. A big thank you to all the LWVBC members who volunteered and made these events a success!



BOE staff member demonstrates how to use the accessible ballot marking device.

ADVOCACY: Combatting Mis / Dis Information: Mail-In Ballots

by Teresa Carroll

Do you have family, friends, neighbors who are skeptical of the safety of mail-in ballots? Share some of these resources with them:

The State of PA is committed to the safety and security of mail in ballots. Please read about the entire process [here](#), including how mail in ballots are securely counted and handled.

Bucks County is committed to making the voting process safe, secure and convenient. That will never change. Voters who choose to vote by mail can use the United States Postal Service or one of the many [ballot drop boxes](#) which will be available throughout the county,

Bucks County has [implemented changes](#) to ensure voters can correct their ballot if they forget the secrecy envelope.

The county also alerted voters of [illegitimate mailings](#) that lead to voters confusing in April 2023.

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LWVBC - defending democracy

ADVOCACY: RULES REFORM IN HARRISBURG

by Sharon Forte

In early 2022, FairdistrictsPA published “Dysfunction by Design: Why Pennsylvania’s State Legislature is So Unproductive...and How We Can Fix It.” A copy of this document was distributed to all of our state legislators at that time. Now, as the General Assembly returns from summer recess, FDPA volunteers have researched and written a performance report assessing the first six months of the 2023-24 legislative session, entitled “Off to a Slow Start: PA Legislative Performance 2023.”



Jon Stevens, David Forte, Connie Borichevsky and Sharon Forte in Harrisburg

On October 3rd, 3 other league members and myself, traveled to Harrisburg to meet up with statewide FairdistrictsPA volunteers. We traversed the halls of the Capitol and hand delivered a copy of the performance report to every PA legislator. At the conclusion of the distribution, a press conference was held to speak to the report’s findings.

The statistics written in the performance report point to the continued need for more productivity in our legislature. FDPA compared neighboring states Virginia, Maryland and New York which have similar geography, demographics, older housing and infrastructure problems.

In Virginia and Maryland, during shorter legislative sessions, over 800 bills were passed. During a 2-year session in New York, over 900 bills were passed compared to only 15 bills being passed in the PA legislature during the 2 year session.

One other glaring statistic in the report shows that our legislature is even much less productive than it has been in recent years. Bills passed in the first 6 months of:

2019: 87

2021: 85

2023: 15

PA Legislative chambers are not collaborating with each other. The House is not securing support for their proposals and conversely, the Senate is not securing support from the House for theirs.

Even though Article III. Legislation in the PA Constitution states that a bill should not be altered or amended as to change its original purpose; nor should unrelated amendments be bundled; this has continued to happen.

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[FOR UPCOMING EVENTS VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

LWVBC - engaging members

RULES REFORM, CONT.

So many of our legislators go to Harrisburg with good ideas and real solutions to help their constituents. Too often, their ideas are ignored, blocked by party leaders and/or amended to oblivion.

That's why we need rules reform now:

- Bills with bipartisan support should receive a vote in committee
- Passing favorable out of committee, bills should receive a vote on the floor
- Bills passed in one chamber should be given automatic consideration in the other chamber

The performance report does end with one positive note:

A newly formed "Meet In The Middle" bipartisan caucus has formed in the State House with 15 Republicans and 27 Democrats. The goal of the caucus, according to co-chair, Rep. Jamie Flick, is "to foster more cooperation between the parties, reduce polarization and find paths to work together to pass commonsense legislation that benefits the people of Pennsylvania." While it is too early to tell how effective this will be, FDPA researchers have noted that inter-governing coalitions in other states have fostered higher levels of cooperation and increased legislative productivity.

Let us continue to advocate for a better functioning and representative government.

Support the League with a commemorative gift

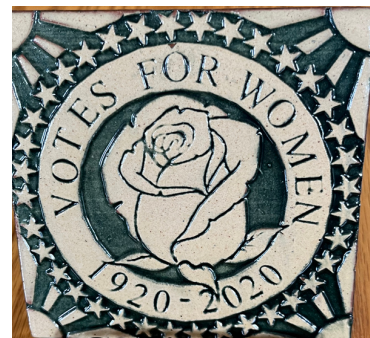
The holidays are just around the corner and we still have some beautiful "one of a kind" tiles for sale and some colorful cockades!

The tiles were "custom" created by the Moravian Tile Works here in Doylestown and designed by the tile works and a couple of our members. The tiles commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment with a yellow rose in the center symbolizing the 36th vote needed for the passage of the 19th Amendment. Thank you, Mr. Burns, from Tennessee, for raising the yellow rose instead of the red rose...his was the deciding vote!!

Please contact [Joann Maroney](#) to arrange pickup or mailing (additional costs apply)



Handmade
Cockades
\$22 each



Mercer Tiles
\$27 each

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LWVBC – empowering voters

Member Spotlight: Kathleen Horwatt

written by Sue Houston

The League of Women Voters offers our congratulations to long-time member Kathleen Horwatt on her recent awards for community service. The PA State Association of Boroughs announced the recipients of their prestigious service awards on June 5. Langhorne Borough Councilperson Kathleen is the 2023 recipient of both the President's Award for exceptionally long and faithful by borough officials and their Distinguished Service Award that recognizes borough officials who provide distinguished to their community.



Kathy Horwatt receiving the PSAB award.

Kathleen is a 40-yr member of the Langhorne Borough Council. She was the first woman President of Council. For all her volunteer efforts, Kathleen was awarded the prestigious Bucks County Women's History 2011 Woman of the Year honor.

Kathleen has served as the Director of Environmental Services for the Bucks County LWV. She was Chairperson of the Marcellus Shale Consensus Study and the followup Pipeline Studies. She has produced several COMCAST videos for the LWVBC, funded by the LWV Citizen Education Fund and other state agencies and featuring students.

She has been actively involved for 36 years with the Langhorne Rotary Club and continues to serve as a VP of the Lower Bucks AAUW. She is a retired school counselor, teacher, and administrator with the Bristol Township School District.

In her spare time (what spare time?) she can be seen supervising Community Service students with the Bucks County Juvenile Justice, gardening, and working on Langhorne Borough projects. She resides with husband, and has two grown children and four grandchildren.

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