

LWVO Statehouse Day March 27, 2019

Session: Luncheon/Keynote address

Introduction: Joan Lawrence

Speaker: Merle Madrid, Chief of Staff, for Ohio Secretary of State La Rose

The Secretary of State could not be present because he is part of an election observation team in Ukraine.

- Recognized the upcoming 100th Anniversary of the Women’s Suffrage Amendment, June 16, 1919
- SB 52—deals with cyber security; it ensures that the Secretary of State would be a permanent member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council; Russian meddling in recent elections is very concerning, even if hacking was unsuccessful in Ohio; social media was still vulnerable.
- The Secretary of State appreciates the partnership between his office and the LWV as a source of reliable (true) information
- New voting machines are being delivered to a number of counties for use in the May primary elections; some of the new voting machines in Hamilton County are modified for use by voters with disabilities; the verified paper trail on voting machines is very helpful with voting audits and recounts
- New legislation establishes a “cyber reserve” who can be called on to trouble-shoot local technical problems
- Local Leagues can continue to work with local Boards of Election, and assist with voter registration

Legislation: SB 107 covers handling of local candidates finance reports. Presently, these reports are filed on paper; this legislation will allow for electronic submission and public availability.

A contest will be underway through April for students in grades 6-12 (see website sticker.oh.gov) to redesign the “I Voted” sticker. The winner will be ready for use in November.

The Secretary of State’s office will work with local partners on these programs:

- 3 attorneys to assist local BOEs on legal questions and provide advice on working with legal questions
- Fresh Start Initiative will send notice to voters to re-register, if they may have been purged; the goal is to have 100% voter participation; Ohio still maintains a 28 day early voting period

Question and Answer session

RE: voting machines:

All counties have machines with paper-verified voting trails; suggested that local BOEs and local partners invite the public to demonstrations of new machines

RE: What if you’ve been purged from voter rolls?

Go to online registration and register there, or register locally or on paper, just as anyone registering (no special information is needed).

RE: How is international election monitoring done?

International group members are deployed to polling locations. They watch for irregularities (e.g., voter cellphone use was found to be a way to document that the voter was entitled to the payment of a bribe). The International group also watches the way the votes are tabulated.

RE: Is the Secretary of State's office still purging voters?

No—at least not as much as in the past. Challenges are to make the process a way to efficiently maintain voter rolls and to make the process less burdensome to voters.

RE: What is the position of the Secretary of State on automatic registration?

The more sources of registration available, the better. There is a need to establish an efficient method of dealing with these registrations. Opting out is better than having to opt-in, a position which agrees with the position of the LWV.

RE: What is the Secretary of State's office doing to help people get registered?

The fresh start mailing (see above); make forms easily available.

RE: Should there be a holiday on Election Day?

The Secretary of State's office is willing to discuss this question with a variety of knowledgeable people. There are pros and cons on both sides of the issue and who or what exactly might be affected.

End of presentation

Alfreda Brown, member of the LWVO board, thanked Mr. Madrid for speaking and praised the members of the League of Women Voters as a reliable source of true information.