



VOTER



PROGRAM by Chris Beuger

Our Annual Meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, June 30, 2020, 6 pm at Gaetano's on Banksville Rd. However, our ability to hold this in-person meeting depends on Allegheny County Covid-19 restrictions being lifted, being in the green phase as outlined by Governor Wolf. Please pencil in this date. As we get closer to this date and restrictions are still in place, we will schedule a virtual meeting date and time.

PRIMARY ELECTION JUNE 2ND, – EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT AND EACH OF US NEEDS TO TAKE ACTION by Annette Shimer

What to do for yourself and others?

1. Go to [VotesPA.com](https://www.votespa.com) Apply for your mail-in ballot today if you haven't done this already. Voters who apply for a ballot by mail will receive a first class stamped envelope to return the ballot. First class mail has priority and is the fastest.
2. Contact your friends, relatives and people you care about to persuade them to do the same.
3. Read and understand the changes in physical voting in the article below. Think about and share ideas for getting low income or minority communities to use a mail-in ballot. Every registered voter will receive a ballot application in the mail, but getting voters to pay attention is the challenge.
4. Contact your local political party and offer to provide rides to the polls if you can. Many municipalities have a local party office. Here is contact information for the county offices:
 - a. Democratic Party – 412-481-5645
 - b. Republican Party - 412-458-0068



Voting in person will be available on June 2nd, but it has never been done this way before. Everything is different.

Because of Covid-19 the Allegheny County Department of Elections wants to minimize the physical risks for voters and poll workers and wants most voters to use the mail-in ballots. However, some voters want or need to vote in person.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIME TO VOTE – IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 (AKA CORONAVIRUS)



We are getting ready to hold forums (live streamed) and need your help. Please send your suggested questions for the candidates. Our Voter Service committee has been working on how to run live streamed only forums and will need voters' questions in advance. Please email your questions to Judy Clack. The current forums we are scheduling are for Congressional District 18, State Senate District 36, and State House Districts 20, 30, 34, and 36.

The primary has been moved to June 2nd, and Allegheny County is currently planning to send a request for a mail-in ballot to every registered voter in the county. I know that many voters and poll workers enjoy the day – the opportunity to see friends, serve their community, and perhaps get some cookies from a bake sale. This year is different. Allegheny County has already trained poll workers on the new machines and procedures we will be using, but Covid-19 may unfortunately make some voters think twice about mingling with so many others, even if it is while wearing a mask and at a distance of 6 feet, and they might decide not to go out and vote.

The mail-in ballot is new this year. It does not require a reason for voting by mail, as the absentee ballot does. It gives each voter the opportunity to mark her or his ballot at home and return it through the mail. It is still a secret ballot, and it does not require a mask or a visit to a polling place. We can all still have our

conversations with family and friends about the candidates, we can check the League's Vote411.org website to see what the candidates have to say to us, and we are still voting once we have made our choices. I am a poll worker and I enjoy the interaction with neighbors that I don't see very often, I enjoy helping a first-time voter understand how the machine works, and I enjoy knowing that I am helping my community. I won't miss worrying about some of the many older (than me!) folks who vote in our precinct, when they vote by mail.

My plan is to vote by mail. Our daughter (who lives out of state) has expressed her concern to my husband and myself about the current situation and had already suggested we both vote by mail. She always has some good suggestions, and this is one I definitely plan to take!

Maureen Mamula

DEATH PENALTY ABOLISHED IN COLORADO by Hazel Cope

In March, Colorado became the 22nd state to abolish the Death Penalty. The sentence of the small handful of prisoners on death row has been commuted to life without parole. Colorado's Governor said he recognized that DP cannot be, and never has been, administered equitably in Colorado.

In February, after nearly 18 years on Florida's death row, Juan Roberto Melendez was found to be innocent of the crime for which he'd been given the DP, and was released. Since 1973, 99 people have been found innocent after being sentenced to death.

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Vote411.org went live on Monday, April 27.

Of the 60 candidates in Allegheny County about 27 had not responded. Many of these candidates are not opposed in the primary.



LWVGP Officers / Executive Committee		Local Area Meeting Chairs	
President	Maureen Mamula	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak
V.P.1 Development, Gun safety	Nancy Naragon	North Hills 412-364-7329	Shirley McIvried
V.P.2 Program	Christina Beuger	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula
Secretary	Heather Wechter (appointed)		
Treasurer, Funding, Gun Safety	Preston Shimer		
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Directors		Housing	Adelaide Smith
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Program, Debates, Vote411	Annette Shimer	Legis. Interviews, Book Club	Judy Donohue
Staff			
Community Information Center	Manager: Barbara Simpson	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr
League Phone Numbers, Websites, and Social Media			
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpgh.org	
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576	palwv.org	
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org	
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh	

FAIR DISTRICTS PA AND MARY LARSEN by Hazel Cope

I was very moved to learn that Mary had been discussing LWV's project, Fair Districts PA, at the South Hills LWV meeting just minutes before her fatal fall at Mt. Lebanon Library. It sounded just the sort of cause to arouse Mary's passion for true democracy, fair elections, and ending gerrymandering. I hope you may be prompted to support Fair Districts PA in Mary's honor.

[Ed. note] To make a donation to Fair Districts PA, you can go to <https://www.fairdistrictspa.com/donate>, or you can send a check to League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, 226 Forster Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102. Fair Districts PA has both advocacy and education organizations.

- Checks made out to **Fair Districts PA** will be used for advocacy and are *not* tax deductible.
- Checks made out to **Fair Districts PA – Education** will be used for education and are tax deductible.

Standing Meetings

Board Meetings

- ✓ **Second** Monday of the month. Lunch at 11:30 a.m., at Einstein Bagels in the Koppers Building. Meeting: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the LWVGP CIC (office) conference room at 436 Seventh Ave., Suite 350

Local Area Unit Meetings

- ✓ **Pittsburgh Central:** 2nd Friday, 1:30 p.m. at the Squirrel Hill Public Library, 5801 Forbes Ave., Pgh. PA 15217. Contact Martha Raak at 412-802-7266 or marbiker1@gmail.com
- ✓ **North Hills:** 3rd Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. at St Paul's Methodist Church at 1965 Ferguson Road in Hampton. Contact Shirley McIvried at 412-364-7329 or howardmciiii@comcast.net
- ✓ **South Hills:** 1st Thursday, 12:30 p.m. at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library, 16 Castle Shannon Blvd., Pgh, PA 15228 (unless otherwise announced). Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or mamula159@hotmail.com

Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ **Education Committee**
4th Wednesday, 1 pm. Contact Joan Franklin at 412-422-7909, fjoan1960@gmail.com or Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-808-6028, lpdrey@verizon.net.
- ✓ **Voter Service Committee**
1st Tuesday, 12:30 pm. Contact Judy Clack at 512-731-0280 or jbclack@yahoo.com.
- ✓ **Gun Safety Committee**
Dates TBD. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or nancynaragon@msn.com
- ✓ **Non-fiction Book Club**
3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Contact Phyllis Dreyfuss, 412-808-6028 or lpdrey@verizon.net

MAY-JUNE CALENDAR

May	
06 Wed	Forum: 7 pm , Jessica Benham, Mark Johnson, Heather Kass, Edward Moeller
12 Tue	Forum: 7 pm , Sen. Jay Costa and William Brittain
14 Thur	Forum: 1:30 pm , Rep. Adam Ravenstahl vs Emily Kinkead
14 Thur	Forum: 7 pm , Rep. Summer Lee vs Chris Roland
18 Mon	Forum: 2 pm , Marco Attisano vs Lissa Geiger-Shulman
19 Tue	Forum: 7 pm , Rep. Mike Doyle vs Gerald Dickinson
June	
30 Tue	Annual Meeting, 6 pm , Gaetano's on Banksville Rd.

Continued from page 1

Voting locations will be centralized. **Don't go to your regular place!** On April 23, the Board of Elections passed a resolution by a 2-1 vote to consolidate polling places within the county to one for each of the 129 municipalities. In the City of Pittsburgh, one polling place shall be located in each of the nine council districts. The resolution is at https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/boe_polling_place_resolution.pdf

All registered voters, who have not applied for a ballot by mail or an absentee ballot, will receive notification prior to the primary election of the location of their polling place.

As of April 23, the county received over 90,000 applications for mail-in ballots; 20,000 ballots have already been mailed out. Processing these applications is a lot of work. Twenty-five work stations are coming from the PA Department of State and the Elections office is working two shifts: 9-3, 3-11 and pulling many workers from other County offices to augment the staff.

Training of election workers for the centralized locations will resume on May 10 with much to be accomplished by video training.

Important dates and links:

May 18, 2020 – Last day to [REGISTER TO VOTE](#) before the primary

May 26, 2020 – Last day to apply for a [mail-in or civilian absentee ballot](#)

June 2, 2020 – Last day for [County Boards of Elections](#) to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (**must be received by 8 P.M.**)

June 2, 2020 – GENERAL PRIMARY Polls are open from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M.

VOTER SERVICE by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair

(1) **Six May candidate forums** have been scheduled. Spread the word. Times indicated below are when the forum **will be recorded** via Zoom. The LWVGP volunteers **will post it on our Facebook page as soon as possible thereafter** at <https://www.facebook.com/lwvpgh/>. LWVGP members have done one practice forum so far and learned a lot.



We're more confident now that this will work well for everyone.

- Congressional District 18: **Tues. May 19, 7 pm**, (Rep. Mike Doyle vs Gerald Dickinson)
- State Senate District 43: **Tues. May 12, 7 pm**, (Sen. Jay Costa and William Brittain)
- State House District 20: **Thurs., May 14, 1:30 pm**, (Rep. Adam Ravenstahl vs Emily Kinhead)
- State House District 30: **Mon. May 18, 2 pm**, (Marco Attisano vs Lissa Geiger-Shulman)
- State House District 34: **Thurs. May 14, 7 pm**, (Rep. Summer Lee vs Chris Roland)
- State House District 36: **Wed. May 6, 7 pm**, (Jessica Benham, Mark Johnson, Heather Kass, Edward Moeller)

(2) Please **SUBMIT QUESTIONS AND REQUEST YOUR GROUPS SUBMIT QUESTIONS** for our candidate forums. Anyone can send an email to lwvpgh@gmail.com, or **text or leave a message at 412-301-5122**. This information is also on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lwvpgh/>. Please share the graphic and explanation. Since we are not holding in-person candidate forums, we must collect questions from the public ahead of time and screen them for applicability to the office being sought, redundancy, and elimination of personal attacks.

(3) **We need a subcommittee to screen and rewrite questions** into a usable format. Please email me at jbclack@yahoo.com if you'd be willing to serve on that subcommittee.

Annette Shimer found an LWVUS list of hints for how best to word questions. It is at https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/lwvus_avoiding_biased_or_leading_questions.pdf.

Thanks.



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FREE ONLINE CIVIC EDUCATION RESOURCE FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS FROM THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

by Amy Kleissas, Director-- League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh, High School Voter Project Chair

It's a time of upheaval and uncertainty, but also a time when we can support each other and our democracy.

Our League was a grateful recipient of a LWVEF youth voter registration grant. Our goal now, is to offer a free resource to assure students that despite things they cannot change, they have the power to participate in our democracy.

This is the third year of our High School Voter Project which provides both civic education and youth voter registration. Very committed LWVGP presenters and volunteers deliver our program with fidelity. We have found that the most effective presentation of our interactive 30-minute PowerPoint lesson occurs in the classroom. Targeting schools with underserved populations, we had six very successful high school visits this year, including one to a Pittsburgh Public High School. We were scheduled to visit six additional schools (with the possibility of scheduling even more) when we were forced to suspend our program due to the coronavirus emergency. We were on course to reach at least 1300 students this school year.



As an alternative to our in-person program, we created an [Online Resource for 12th grade students](#).

We are inviting principals in Allegheny County to forward the lesson and attachments to any of their teachers who have seniors in their schedules. Our experience tells us that this is mainly English teachers and at times, social studies teachers.

The lesson has civic education elements, as well as the opportunity to register to vote. It has value as an [online lesson](#) which teachers may send to all of their seniors, rather than being posted as an option for students. There are also opportunities and resources for teachers to [extend student learning](#). Principals are asked to forward four attachments (teacher instructions, the online lesson and two teacher resources) to their designated teachers. We request participating teachers to keep a count of students who complete their voter registration applications, evidenced by a photo students email to them.

This program is copyrighted by the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh, but will be shared with other PA League chapters with permission. Interested PA League members should email Amy Kleissas at amy.kleissas@gmail.com.

In this strange new reality we hope to convince young citizens that it is their right and responsibility to learn about our representative democracy and to participate in it by voting. There is no real substitute available to the LWVGP for the real interaction and energy of being in the classroom. The good news about our program is that with each new class of seniors our program is new again. We hope that in the fall and in the New Year we will be able to resume our in-person visits to Allegheny Country high schools.

A final word from Charles M. Schultz and "Peanuts": "Worrying won't stop the bad stuff from happening-- It just stops you from enjoying the good."