



VOTER

League of Women Voters of Central Delaware County

May 2020

Criminal Justice Webinars — May 13 and June 16

Don't miss our Civic Education Criminal Justice webinars coming up May 13 and June 16 to wrap up our program year.

Join LWV-CDC and NAACP Media Branch for a thought-provoking, two-part webinar program addressing the Criminal Justice System and current policies and practices that disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged members of our community. A panel of experts will examine and discuss these issues, how to address them, and what you can do to contribute and participate.

Part 1: Thursday, May 13, noon - 1:30 pm

Pre-trial Pitfalls: "Caught Up in the System"

Part 1 addresses cash bail, pre-trial incarceration, access to effective legal representation and loss of employment. The speaker panel includes:

- Lee Awbrey, Delaware County Public Defender's Office — panel moderator
- Heather Lewis, Norristown Councilwoman; Participatory Defense & Montco Bail Fund
- Haley Prichard, Social Justice League Fellow, ACLU of Pennsylvania.
- Anton Andrew, Prison Society of Pennsylvania

This presentation is free but you must register to receive the Zoom link. To register and submit questions for Part 1 - Click [here](#).

Part 2: Wednesday, June 16, noon- 1:30 pm

Post-trial: Conviction, Consequences, and Costs

Part 2 addresses the economic impact of incarceration and criminal records of prisoners, parolees and families, employment prospects, social issues and court fees. The panel will discuss current solutions and interventions being offered by both government and concerned community groups. Speaker panel includes:

- Lee Awbrey, Delco Public Defender Office — Panel Moderator
- Andrew Christie, ACLU of Pennsylvania
- State Rep. Mike Zabel, Judiciary Committee — Subcommittee for Crimes and Corrections, Juvenile Justice Task Force
- Maurice Q. Jones, General Manager, People Advancing Reintegration Recycle Works

This presentation is free but you must register to receive the Zoom link. To register for Part 2, click [here](#).

For more information, contact Chair [Ralf Graves](#).

Don't Forget the Annual Meeting — May 27

The LWV-CDC Annual Meeting will be May 27 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. We need at least 20 members — and it is members only — to attend, to make a quorum, so please plan to come. Our speaker will be Jamie Mogil, a voters rights attorney and chair of Voter Services for the Lower Marion-Narberth League.

Once you have registered for the meeting, you will receive a PDF of the Annual Meeting Booklet. It is recommended that you print out the PDF and the agenda beforehand. Register [here](#).



Jamie Mogil



President's Message

As my three years as president come to an end, and as I write this last Voter letter to you, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It has been a valuable experience personally and helped me grow as a leader. I have learned so much from all of you.

LWV-CDC is well-respected and highly regarded in our community. It has been such an honor to be a part of an organization focused on empowering voters and advancing civic education. The League's fine reputation is built on the work of members and friends who contribute their time and expertise to support non-partisan political engagement in our community. I have been fortunate to have worked closely with such an energetic and effective board of directors and many productive league committees. There have been so many noteworthy moments. As I write this last message, I wish to share a few highlights and reflections:

2018/19

Haverford Township League merged with LWV-CDC and brought us immeasurable talent, energy and commitment to contribute to our mission.

LWV-CDC was honored by Congregation Beth Israel with their Friend of the Community Award for our positive and non-partisan contributions to the Delaware County community.

Our Public Health Study Group re-convened and updated the 2010 Public Health Department Study that served as a basis for County Council's decision to prioritize the formation of a Public Health Department.

LWV-CDC and its membership played a huge role in selecting, educating and training friends and neighbors on the new voting machines, mail-in voting and paper ballots.

2019/20

While the world may have profoundly changed with the global pandemic, LWV-CDC demonstrated both resilience and adaptability when it adroitly pivoted and began implementing both board and committee meetings; candidate forums (1 Primary and 4 General Election) and event programming (9 Hot Topics) via Zoom in a virtual format. All of these were exceptionally well-attended.

2020/21

Membership is growing and we are attracting many new members. Several factors may have influenced this growth. I believe one reason is that Zoom provided greater exposure to audiences interested in the work of the League. We were able to provide both live streaming and on-demand viewing of candidate forums, events, social media campaigns and educational programming – extending the impact of our programs and driving interest in joining and becoming involved in the League.

We continue to build and foster relationships and partnerships with many organizations such as Media Fellowship House, NAACP Media Branch and student-led organizations. These partnerships empower us to combine forces to accomplish common goals and reach broader audiences.

Two new committees were formed and organized, one focused on legislative advocacy and one of diversity, equity and inclusion in order to take political action on compelling local issues and social injustice in our community.

As I hand the gavel to our new president, Anne Mosakowski, the future under Anne's leadership looks bright and I am confident that with her creativity and dedication, LWV-CDC will continue to grow and prosper and meet the many challenges ahead.

Many thanks to all of you for allowing me the opportunity to serve. I walk away with wonderful memories, experiences and friendships. With gratitude,

Barbara Amstutz

We Have Lost Joyce Ellis

LWV-CDC's long-time membership chair, Joyce Ellis, died April 26 at the age of 92. We lost her before we could celebrate her award in March of the Delaware County Women's Commission's Woman of Achievement Award. The commission's theme this year was "Valiant Women of the Vote," and Joyce was named one of three "current visionary leaders" for her life's work with the League.

She was presented this award by a special resolution at the County Council Meeting March 17. Joyce has devoted her life to women's issues, to voting rights and to the League of Women Voters. The League had planned to celebrate her award as soon as COVID restrictions were lifted. She served on the LWV-CDC Board in many capacities over the years, including as treasurer, on the Voter Service Committee and, in recent years, as membership chair.

Joyce was something of a renaissance woman. She was a freelance journalist for the Delaware County Daily Times and Town Talk newspapers; she was a gifted photographer who ran her own business, Words and Pictures, and for many years she and long-time League Member Olivia Thorne ran Computer Mentors, a computer training and hardware troubleshooting business.

She also gave of herself to many different programs and charities. She was on the board of the Media Fellowship House and she helped run a writing program for families — With Pen in

Hand — with another long-time League Member, Cecelia Evans, for 12 years. In that program, she helped hundreds of youngsters learn to love writing and gave them the self-confidence to continue on with their educations. When her children were young, Joyce once hosted a local cooking show, Home in the Kitchen, volunteered at a children's hospital and was a Brownie troop leader. Later she was very active in the Delaware County Press Club.



Court of Common Pleas Candidates Forum — May 13

LWV-CDC will hold a candidates forum for the five candidates for the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas May 13 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. These trial judges make decisions on criminal and civil matters at the county level that affect many lives.

Voters will be voting for two candidates, but four of the five candidates cross-filed so they will be appearing on the Democratic and Republican primary ballots.

The candidates are Deborah Krull, Tinu Moss, Michael Ruggieri, Raymond Santarelli and Deborah Truscello.

To register and submit questions, click [here](#). The forum will also be available for viewing afterwards on our website and our [YouTube channel](#).

May-June Events Calendar

May 13 (Thursday) — Civics Education: Criminal Justice, Part 1 — Financial Issues of Incarceration. Noon on Zoom. A panel discussion moderated by Lee Awbrey. This will be a two-part program with the second part on June 16. See Page 1 for details.

May 13 (Thursday) — Delaware County Court of Common Pleas judges Candidates Forum. 7 p.m. Zoom. See above.

May 27 (Thursday) — Central Delaware County League of Women Voters Annual Meeting, 7 p.m. By Zoom. See Page 1. Members only. Registration information on Page 1.

June 16 (Wednesday) — Civics Education — Criminal Justice, part 2. Noon. Zoom. Registration information on Page 1.

June 18-19 (Friday and Saturday) — Virtual 54th Biennial LWVPA state convention. Still time to register. Visit the state League's convention page [here](#).

Election Law Bills in Pa. Legislature

By Jodine Mayberry

Legislative Advocacy Chair

With hundreds of bills pending in legislatures around the country proposing to reform election laws, perhaps you have been wondering what the Pennsylvania Legislature is proposing to do along those lines.

So far the Republican-controlled Legislature has been proceeding with caution. Thus far, a few dozen bills have been introduced by both sides to either tighten or expand voting opportunities — proposing everything from abolishing no-excuse mail-in ballots to allowing same-day registration to holding open primaries to providing curbside voting for the disabled.

The House and Senate State Government Committees recently completed 10 joint hearings on various election law issues. The parties are now anticipating three months of negotiations to come up with bills that can win bipartisan support and avoid Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf's veto. No bills have been voted out of committee.

Republicans are gearing up for another run at a photo ID law for both in-person and mail-in ballots. The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania was the lead plaintiff in a successful court suit to overturn the last Photo ID law in 2012. The state Supreme Court held then that it was an unconstitutional burden on voters.

The new photo ID bill, H.B. 853, has the largest number

of cosponsors, 44, of all the election law bills introduced so far. Proponents hope it will pass constitutional muster by allowing voters without photo IDs to use two non-photo forms of ID or by providing free state photo identification cards.

On the other side of the aisle, Democrats have introduced bills calling for automatic or same-day registration, open primaries and automatic mailing of ballots to voters. They also want to expand early voting. Last year, a small percentage of voters "voted early" by going to satellite election bureau offices to obtain mail-in ballots, fill them out and hand them in.

Both sides are also looking at fixing some of the problems encountered last year under Act 77, especially allowing earlier pre-canvassing (opening of outer envelopes) of mail-in ballots to prepare for counting. They are also looking at ways to cure ballot defects, such as the failure to sign the outer envelope or failing to put the ballot in the inner privacy envelope.

The state is replacing the ancient and trouble-prone SURE voter registration system with a new system. House State Government Committee Chair Seth M. Grove, R-York, at a recent press conference called on the Department of State to provide extensive training to county election bureaus to implement the new system and to standardize the election process across counties. He also wants to ban independent voter advocacy groups from sending mail-in applications to voters — a practice that caused such confusion in last year's election that some voters needlessly applied for ballots multiple times.

Here Comes Redistricting, Ready or Not

As anticipated, Pennsylvania will lose a congressional district because of the loss of population since the last census was taken in 2010, falling from 18 to 17 seats.

Thanks to the State Supreme Court's re-districting of the congressional districts three years ago, the delegation has been evenly divided, 9-9, between Democratic and Republican representatives. But now congressional reapportionment returns to the hands of the state Legislature. The Legislature's four-person reapportionment commission, made up of the top two Republican and Democratic leaders, has failed to choose a non-partisan fifth member — and chair. The choice now goes to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Despite a valiant fight, Fair Districts PA, of which the League is a big part, was unable to win passage of a constitutional amend-

ment to create a non-partisan, independent redistricting commission in time for this year's once-in-a-decade reapportionment.



Speakers at the Valley Forge event

Nevertheless, Fair Districts and LWV continue to fight for a transparent process and fair rules to carry out the upcoming reapportionment.

The organizations held a People-Powered Maps Action Rally at Valley Forge National Park April 29, to emphasize the need to keep working toward passage of a constitutional amendment before the next census and reapportionment 10 years from now. Recently Democratic State Sen. Lisa Boscola, of Bethlehem, reintroduced S.B. 584 proposing a constitutional amendment establishing a non-partisan redistricting commission. She is also sponsoring a bill to change the Constitution to allow for direct ballot initiatives by voters. Currently only the Legislature can propose constitutional amendments.