



## Why Delaware needs to change the state primary date

*The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. The League of Women Voters also seeks to protect the right of all citizens to vote, and encourage all citizens to vote. (LWVUS Position on Representative Government)*

### What are the issues with our current state primary date?

- Prior to this year, there was a small window between the primary date and general election. This year due to COVID, the window narrowed with vote by mail and no excuse absentee voting. In 2022, the window will continue to narrow with early voting and the proposed vote by mail and no excuse absentee voting. This has resulted in voters becoming less informed about the candidates because there is limited time to hold candidate forums or to obtain candidate views for LWV's Vote411, and other online voter portals.
- During the past 12 years, voter turnout for the state primary is relatively low (27%), while turnout for the presidential primary is slightly higher (31%).<sup>1</sup> Combining the two primaries may increase voter turnout.
- This year the LWVDE hosted more than 25 webinars to educate voters. There was confusion among participants concerning the state primary. They believed that we already had the primary when they voted in the presidential primary. Having one primary for state and presidential candidates would eliminate this confusion.

### When do other states hold primaries?

- Delaware has the latest primary of all states, with only 3 states holding primaries in early September.<sup>2</sup>
- Twenty states have state and presidential primaries on different dates.<sup>2</sup>
- Only 1 state (NC) is actively in session when they hold primaries. Note that some of the larger states are in session throughout the year. (NY, PA, NJ, MA, MI, OH)<sup>23</sup>

**The LWV of Delaware supports this bill:** However, we also want to ensure that campaigning during the primary does not impact the ongoing work occurring during the General Assembly.

**HB30 Changing the primary date:** This bill moves the primary date to coincide with the Presidential primary - fourth Tuesday in April.

*The League works all year, every year, to empower all eligible voters to participate in our political system. Our work especially seeks to aid those from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, minorities, and low-income Americans. Hundreds of local volunteer teams work year-round to register, inform and mobilize hundreds of thousands of voters in the lead-up to Election Day. The League also serves millions of voters through [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org), our one-stop elections information hub.*

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<sup>1</sup><https://elections.delaware.gov/results/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/VAO/PrimaryElectionsCalendar.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.ncsl.org/documents/ncsl/2018\\_Session\\_Calendar.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/documents/ncsl/2018_Session_Calendar.pdf)

