

**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

**We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.**

**CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGES – Sue Claire Harper & Carol Jones**



Carol Jones (photo Ross Kruglak)

In preparing to write this newsletter article, I reviewed the last article we submitted for the previous "VOTER", hoping that I could find some evidence that we as a nation, and we as a League, were moving forward in dealing with this Covid-19 pandemic. Although I regret to report that Covid-19 cases in Delaware, especially in Sussex County are only increasing as of this writing, our state and local leagues along with the LWVUS is proving to be quite resilient and creatively adaptive to the current "normal", converting restrictions into opportunities.

The recent efforts of the **Election/Voting Committee** led by Jill Itzkowitz is a prime example of making the most of our statewide restrictions on public assembly. Although the League has long supported a no-excuse absentee ballot measure, Jill and her committee drafted a March 23rd letter to Governor Carney requesting that he immediately exercise his executive power to allow a no-excuse absentee ballot in regard to Delaware's Presidential Primary, which has been moved forward to June 2nd. Although this letter carried the signatures of the LWVDE co-presidents, full credit for this effort goes to Jill and her committee. Not surprisingly, the Governor's immediate March 24th State of Emergency order did not credit the role played by the LWVDE, his decision clearly reflected the League's efforts. It is our hope that in the future, based on this current order, the permanent broadening of the absentee ballot process and/or the ability to vote by mail will be achieved.



Sue Claire Harper (photo Ross Kruglak)

**On Saturday, May 30th from 1:15-4pm a program for our biennial LWVDE Council meeting via ZOOM will be led by LWVSC president Gwendolyn Miller.** Following a very brief business meeting, Gwendolyn will lead a 2-hour introductory, interactive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awareness program. We are most fortunate to have Gwendolyn's expertise on this topic, as she has conducted similar DEI programs throughout the country. According to the by-laws, the Council is made up of all state board members and the presidents and vice-presidents of the local leagues and such others as may be invited by the state board president(s). Because of the nature of Gwendolyn's presentation, we are limiting the number of people in attendance so there will be few additional attendees. Her training program will be offered to a much broader audience at a later time when we are once again able to meet in person.

In view of the pandemic restrictions, **the LWVUS national office also realized the need to modify the arrangements for holding the 54<sup>th</sup> LWVUS Convention previously scheduled in Washington, DC for June 25-27. This year's theme "Women Power the Vote for 100 Years" will include activities to plan for the next 100 years and beyond.** By virtue of the LWVUS Bylaws, our state League is allotted 11 delegates (State: 3; New Castle: 4; Kent:1 and Sussex: 3) as voting members. This will now be a virtual event and we do not know if any of the sessions will be open to non-delegates to observe. Given the massive logistics involved in transitioning this previously live 3-day event into a virtual experience, the specifics have yet to be finalized. However, we encourage all to mark their calendars, indicate your own interest in attending as a delegate and stay tuned for additional information as pre-registration will be required! You'll know the details as soon as we get them.

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Although the pandemic forced us to postpone the myriad of programs which had been planned in celebration of the LWV 100th Anniversary, we hope to reschedule all as soon as our national and local governments decide it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, we urge all to implement the health practices outlined in [DPH Coronavirus Portal](#) and the [CDC Coronavirus Portal](#)



## Census Updates Schedule Due to COVID-19

By Sandy Spence

**COVID-19 has obviously affected the 2020 Census plan dramatically. The Census Bureau has responded by postponing scheduled steps accordingly. All of these are subject to further delays depending on how quickly the status of COVID-19 gets under control.**

Here is a summary of the new dates that affect us most:

- ✓ **Self-responses:** March 12–October 31
- ✓ **Group quarters** (college dormitories, nursing homes, etc.): April 2–September 3
- ✓ **Peak Field Operations** (includes selecting and hiring field staff): June 1
- ✓ **Nonresponse Follow-up** (Census takers interview non-responding households in person): August 11–October 31
- ✓ **Service-based** (soup kitchens, shelters, and regularly scheduled food vans to count the people they serve), **Mobile Questionnaire Assistance** where Census Bureau staff assists people with responding online at places people gather (events, grocery stores, etc.) and **Count of People Experiencing Homelessness Outdoors:** All need further review and coordination with outside partners and stakeholders.
- ✓ **Deliver Apportionment Counts to the President** (determines each state's number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives): by April 30, 2021.
- ✓ **President Delivers Apportionment Counts to Congress:** Within 14 days of receipt.
- ✓ **Deliver Redistricting Counts to States** (local counts each state needs to complete legislative redistricting): Deliver by July 31, 2021.

The last three items are changes from current law that will require Congressional consent. **The Delaware General Assembly also will need to adjust its schedule for redistricting the state House and Senate, which would have been completed by June 30, 2021 under the original schedule.**

A detailed list of earlier and new Schedules for all Census activities is available at <https://my.lwv.org/delaware/census> under “operational adjustments.”

## Redistricting Help Wanted.



The redistricting process is key to fair elections. Being involved in that process gives you a chance to engage directly in the political process, get informed of principles of fair mapping, and help develop election districts get rid of the gerrymandering that is so pervasive in our political system.

That is why **LWVUS created the People-Powered Fair Maps Project covering all 50 states plus DC.** The LWVDE project is gearing up for our part in that nation-wide project. We are hoping to develop our own maps for the State House and Senate districts following LWV principles of non-partisanship and transparency in addition to basic requirements of law.

To join the Committee working on this project, please email [sandyspence325@gmail.com](mailto:sandyspence325@gmail.com) as soon as possible. It is likely that most meetings will be conducted on Zoom to enable participation from all three local Leagues. No specific skills required. But, we are especially interested in recruiting someone with a background in geography and use of GIS tools. If you know someone like that, let us know, even if they are not (yet) a League member.

## VOTE411 VOTER GUIDE UPDATE

The VOTE411 voter guide will have information up for the Delaware **presidential primary and school board elections throughout the months of May and June.** In addition to candidate profiles and personalized ballot information, check VOTE411 for the latest news about election delays, absentee ballots, and any candidate forums state-wide.

Per order of Governor Carney, **all** Delaware voters can vote absentee in 2020 elections while the state of emergency remains in effect. Start at either [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) or [elections.delaware.gov](http://elections.delaware.gov) to learn about it and request your absentee ballot(s).

The Delaware state PTA will be hosting virtual candidate forums for school districts where the seat is contested, and PTA has a presence... including most NCC districts and Caesar Rodney in Kent. The virtual forums are tentatively scheduled for the evenings of June 2nd and 3rd and will be live streamed on Facebook.

You can help Delawareans to "*Be Aware, VOTE Aware*" by following us on social media and sharing posts with hashtags #VOTE411 #BeAwareVoteAware. Delaware VOTE411 posts will be found on Facebook ([@vote411de](https://www.facebook.com/vote411de)), Instagram ([@LWVDE](https://www.instagram.com/LWVDE)), and Twitter ([@LWVDE](https://twitter.com/LWVDE)). We also have an [LWVDE VOTE411 TeamYouTube Channel](#) this year that you can check out. We have several videos planned around VOTE411, the importance of voting, and absentee voting procedures in Delaware.

We are encouraging all **League members to add a VOTE411 frame to your Facebook profile photo** during May and June. Profile photos have the best reach of all! On Facebook, go to your own profile page, hover the mouse over your profile photo and click "Update", then "Add Frame", and enter "VOTE411" in the search bar to find the frame shown below.



Finally, as the elections draw nearer, consider writing a letter to the editor, or a making a post on NextDoor.com, about the importance of still performing our civic duties of voting and completing the census in 2020. Both activities can be done entirely from our Delaware homes in this time of social isolation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kim Wells, 2020 Delaware VOTE411 Coordinator. 302-650-6897 (mobile) [kimwells19702@gmail.com](mailto:kimwells19702@gmail.com)

**HOT TOPIC: SPEAKER, ANTHONY ALBENCE COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS OF DELAWARE,** Monday, May 18, 2020 11 am – 12:30 pm. There will be a 30-45-minute presentation followed by questions from the membership that have been submitted prior to the zoom meeting. Please send your questions to [lwvde@comcast.net](mailto:lwvde@comcast.net). Further details will be sent to you closer to the event.



# Online Voter Guide for Delaware 2020 Elections

## Before each election,

1. Go to [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org)
2. Enter your home address
3. Click "Submit"
4. Click "Explore Now" under "Find what's on your ballot".

## You can find out...

- Where is your polling place?
- What's on your ballot?
- Who's running in each race?
- The candidates' qualifications and viewpoints

All Delaware voters can vote absentee in 2020; request your absentee ballots from [ivote.de.gov](http://ivote.de.gov)

## Delaware Election Dates in 2020

### July 7, 2020 – Presidential Primary

Register by June 13, Switch parties by May 8

### July 21, 2020 – School Board Elections

### Sept. 15, 2020 – State Primaries

Register by Aug. 22, Switch parties by May 29

### Nov. 3, 2020 – General Election

Register to vote by October 10

**Be Aware.  
VOTE Aware.**

**Check out  
[VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org)**

## ADVOCACY CORPS UPDATE - MAY 2020

by Linda Barnett, Chairperson, Advocacy Corps



As everyone knows, the Delaware Legislature is on hiatus right now. Nevertheless, the League's Advocacy Corps is maintaining vigilance and keeping alert to public policy issues. The following topic areas are the focus, and the League members concentrating on those areas are as shown below:

- ✓ Census and Redistricting: Sandy Spence
- ✓ Education: Kathleen Baker (acting)
- ✓ Elections & Voting: Jill Itzkowitz
- ✓ Environment: Charlie Garlow / Coralie Pryde
- ✓ Government, Finance & Taxation: Jack Young
- ✓ Health: Joann Hasse
- ✓ Housing: Gina Miserendino / Peggy Schultz
- ✓ Justice: Sandy Spence
- ✓ Land Use & Transportation: Peggy Schultz
- ✓ Reproductive Choice: Linda Barnett / Joann Hasse
- ✓ Social Policy: Linda Barnett

The most urgent matter to attend to now is what could be regarded as the League's signature issue – namely, access to voting. Given the current crisis, our citizens need to be able to vote without worrying about risking their health to do so. Thus, we are pushing hard for **vote-by-mail** legislation. A bill pending in the General Assembly, HB 175, would establish such a system. Getting bills passed right now is a long shot, but we are determined to try.

An action alert went out to all League members recently asking you to contact your legislators about HB 175. If you haven't done so yet, it's time!

Here again is the relevant portion of that alert:

**ACTION ALERT!** To: LWV of Delaware members and friends

### LWVDE VOTING BILLS AND INFORMATION

In these tough times, the League of Women Voters of Delaware is still working for you. This message **contains election information, actions you can take to contact your legislators for support.**

### IMPORTANT LEGISLATION

Delaware law does not currently allow no excuse absentee voting and there is no vote-by-mail.

Last month Governor Carney delayed the presidential primary and expanded the reasons on the absentee ballot to include self-isolation due to COVID-19. With the general election coming up November 3, we want to be proactive in developing alternatives to in person voting in case health risks still exist. The Wisconsin election exemplifies a cautionary tale if a state is not prepared.

**The LWVDE is asking you to contact your legislators and the governor** on each of the following two vote by mail options. We have included (below) the LWVDE position paper on the current vote by mail bill HB175 that identifies the benefits and issues of a vote by mail process, including the unproven charge that such a process is open to abuse. Here is an excellent letter to the editor from one of our members, Alan Evantash, that highlights the importance of vote by mail at this time. <https://delawarestatenews.net/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/letter-to-the-editor-expand-voter-provisions-for-safer-november-presidential-election/>

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1. HB175 is currently on the ready list in the legislature, but given the shortened session, may not be considered. This bill would allow any qualified voter to contact the State Elections Commission for a vote by mail ballot, which you can drop off at any polling place or secure drop box. Passage of HB175 would enable Delaware to join the 28 states that currently allow voters to vote by mail without providing a reason.
2. On March 27, the CARES Act was signed into law. This federal legislation includes \$400 million for states to prepare for the 2020 elections. Delaware could take advantage of these funds to create a comprehensive vote by mail process where the state mails ballots to every registered voter automatically. Five states currently vote by mail, and many other states are considering changing to all vote by mail if health risks remain in November. Let's add Delaware to the list.

## **WHY DELAWARE NEEDS VOTING BY MAIL**

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. The LWV of Delaware bases its action on the LWVUS position.**

*The League of Women Voters supports HB 175, which allows for voting by mail.  
Prepared June 2019*

The biggest reason we support this bill is that it increases voting. By providing the opportunity to cast ballots in the mail, voters will be able to avoid long lines at polling stations, and they won't have to take time off from work to exercise their right to vote. Oregon, the first state to have all-vote-by mail, has consistently ranked among the states with the highest voter turnout. Oregon voting rates are especially high among young voters and in midterm elections when turnout traditionally lags. In 2016, 68% of Oregon residents voted, which is 8% above the national average, and 45% of voters under 34 voted, which is twice the national average.<sup>1</sup>

Another reason for supporting this bill is vote by mail makes the ballot box accessible to voters who have difficulties getting to the polls, such as working families, students, and individuals with disabilities. It makes sure that every eligible American who wants to vote is able to make their voice heard.

Voting by mail may also reduce costs by reducing the number of poll workers and polling places. A Pew study cited that in Colorado, costs decreased an average of 40%.<sup>2</sup>

Those that are against vote by mail cite security issues as a major problem. Oregon and Washington have addressed this by creating secure drop off sites and a centralized ballot review. They also have implemented a signature verification process that checks the ballot to the registration form. It has been reported that Oregon has mailed out more than 100 million ballots since 2000 with only about a dozen cases of proven fraud.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/you-can-t-hack-paper-how-oregon-fights-election-meddling-n930481>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/all-mail-elections.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/05/voting-by-mail-is-growing-and-should-grow-more.html>

## **Webmaster Newsletter Report**

By Mary Ann Coe

1. Website Analytics – 208 users, 71% were new users.
2. New postings
  - a. Vote411 link posted on Sidebar. Shows up on every page.
  - b. General information about [Vote411](#) issues. (Placed under Voting in Delaware menu item.)
  - c. [2020 Census Self-Response rankings](#) Use this dashboard to see the states, counties and cities with the highest response rates in the 2020 Census.
  - d. New menu item – Community Activities. Let the webmaster know if you have any items to include.

The following article on Equal Pay Day 2020 submitted by Sandy Spence from Census Bureau press release at <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/03/equal-pay-day-is-march-31-earliest-since-1996.html>

## Women Still Have to Work Three Months Longer to Equal What Men Earned in a Year

By Mary Leisenring, U.S. Census Bureau

For the first time and the earliest since its inception, Equal Pay Day – how far into the year women must work to equal what men earned the previous year – was March 31, 2020, a sign that the gender pay gap is narrowing.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s [Current Population Survey Data](#) tracks the median earnings of full-time, year-round workers used to calculate Equal Pay Day.

Originated in 1996 by the [National Committee on Pay Equity](#) (NCPE), the Equal Pay Day initiative spotlights the gap between men’s and women’s wages.

At its lowest point in 1973, full-time, working women earned a median of 56.6 cents to every dollar that full-time, working men earned. Since then, women’s median earnings have gained 25 cents, reaching 81.6 cents in 2018.

This pay gap is costly.

NCPE estimates that “over a working lifetime, this wage disparity costs the average American woman and her family an estimated \$700,000 to \$2 million, impacting Social Security benefits and pensions.”

**At the current rate, it will take until 2059 for women to achieve equal pay.**

### UPDATE WITH MOST RECENT AVAILABLE DELAWARE DATA

**Provided by the Office of Women’s Advancement and Advocacy  
Department of Human Resources, State of Delaware:**

- White women in Delaware earn 83% of white men’s earnings
- Black women in Delaware earn 69% of white men’s earnings
- Hispanic women in Delaware earn 56% of white men’s earnings

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018 (5-year estimate)

### CALENDAR

Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 9:30 - noon	ZOOM meeting	<b>LWVDE ADVOCACY CORPS Meeting.</b> Regular 2nd Wednesday meeting of the LWVDE Advocacy Corps (legislative lobby group) in Dover. For details or to attend, contact Advocacy Chair Linda Barnett
Cancelled due to LWVDE council meeting in May.	ZOOM meeting	<b>LWVDE BOARD MEETING.</b> No meeting in May.
Monday, May 18, 2020 11 am-12:30 pm	ZOOM meeting	<b>HOT TOPIC: SPEAKER, ANTHONY ALBENCE COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS OF DELAWARE.</b> Details will be sent closer to the event.
Saturday, May 30, 2020 1:15 – 4 pm	ZOOM meeting	<b>LWVDE COUNCIL MEETING.</b> Details will be sent closer to the event.
Tuesday, June 2, 2020, 11 a.m. - noon	ZOOM meeting	<b>ELECTION COMMITTEE MEETING.</b> Contact Jill Itzkowitz for details (302-650-6862) <a href="mailto:jillitzkowitz@gmail.com">jillitzkowitz@gmail.com</a>

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