

The Voter

WINTER 2023/24

newsletter from the
League of Women Voters
of Bucks County



message from the president

As we begin 2024, it is worth reflecting on all that the League of Women Voters of Bucks County achieved over the last 12 months. The following chart summarizes our activities.

Our Impact in 2023		
Over 4000 Volunteer Hours Invested in Our Mission	Hosted 125 Activities and Events	Over 500 Volunteers Dedicated to Our Mission
Voter Registrations 12 High Schools 3 Colleges 1 Naturalization Ceremony	Over 30,000 Voter Guides Distributed	Covered 232 Races 374 Candidates in 2 Voters Guides

Our Voter Service activities included 17 registration events. We also provided 30 senior residences with packets for registering their new residents, as well as information about completing mail-in ballots.

Our Voters Guide for the 2023 Primary and Municipal Elections included 232 races with 372 candidates. This guide, published online at Vote411.org, was accessed by nearly 7000 Bucks County residents, and distributed through the Bucks County Herald (via 25,000 print copies, and tens of thousands online consumers across the county).

Despite valiant efforts by our Candidate Forum committee, we were unable to convince any candidates to participate in live candidate forums. We did conduct recorded interviews with five of the ten candidates running for the Central Bucks School Board.

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Jean Weston
President

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Upcoming Events

- Jan 11th - [Making your Vote Count](#)
- Feb 7th - End Closed Primaries in PA
- Feb 15th - [DEI Book Discussion](#)

LWVBC – empowering voters

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER, CONT.

Our Advocacy committees covered five areas of interest: Education, the Electoral College, Rules Reform, Open Primaries and Voter Access. Quite a lot to cover! The Education team produced two informative webinars, “The Importance of School Board Elections” and “Censorship in Schools: What Can You Do? ”, and the other groups are planning events for 2024.

Members of our League conducted virtual Meet & Greet gatherings with all 14 of the Bucks County state legislators. We have members following all 9 school boards throughout the year.

We have representatives attending Chamber of Commerce meetings. And we participated in 10 community events to increase the League’s visibility throughout the county. The coming year promises to be just as successful thanks to all of the dedicated volunteers who make up our organization. If you would like to join the effort to empower voters and defend democracy in Bucks County, please let us know at LWVBucksPA@gmail.com. We can only make a difference if our members step up.

Join us to make this a very Happy New Year!

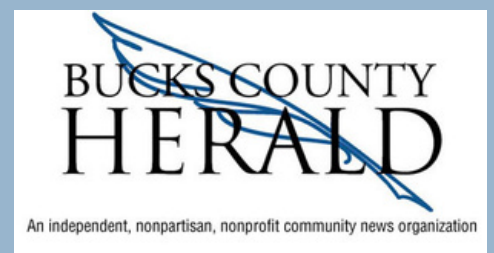
LEAGUE HOLIDAY BRUNCH

by Bridget Mulcahy

On a balmy December morning, League members gathered at the inviting home of Connie Borichevsky. This was the first “in-person” holiday get together since 2019. Attendees enjoyed a vast variety of brunch dishes, pastries, and treats. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with long time and newer members. Discussions ranged from legislative goals, recent election results to families and holiday plans. A huge thank you to Connie for her hospitality and to Julie Cummings for assisting and managing the guest list.

Bridget Wingert, founder of the Bucks County Herald, was the invited speaker. She gave us a history of the founding of the Herald, stories of fielding reader letters and the challenges of operating during the pandemic. Local journalism is essential to providing accurate information to the community.

In today’s age of mis and disinformation, having a trusted source of factual information is vital. Today, the Herald is operated as a non-profit. You can support the foundation [here](#).



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LWVBC – defending democracy

PENNSYLVANIA'S FUNDING FORMULA FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by Liz Downing



You may not have heard of the Basic Education Funding Commission, but it will have a huge impact on the future of public education in PA.

As a retired educator, I feel particularly involved in the future of education. As the parent of a son who graduated from local public schools, I am invested in the quality of our schools. As a senior citizen, I am very concerned about the future for today's young people.

My son benefited from a well-funded public school system. In Pennsylvania, this is a constitutional right. Every child deserves qualified instructors, up to date materials, safe and well-maintained school buildings. These are just some of the requirements our school systems need to prepare our young people to be successful as adults.

In Pennsylvania, funding for public schools is largely dependent on local real estate taxes. This is because Pennsylvania's state expenditure on public schools is among the lowest in the country. (See this [info from the LWVPH](#) on the spending.)

REPORT CARD	
<i>Basic Education Funding Commission</i>	
CRITERIA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	set adequacy target for ALL 500 school districts
<input type="checkbox"/>	include pre-K, special education, facilities, and transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	set state share target
<input type="checkbox"/>	lay out reasonable timeline



The previous funding formula was very unbalanced. For over two decades, the discrepancy between well-funded schools (in communities with high property taxes) and underfunded schools (in communities with lower tax bases) grew larger each year. Finally, a law suit was brought against the State of PA challenging this formula and its effects on school districts across the state. The previous formula was found to be unconstitutional, and a committee was charged with revamping the funding of PA public schools.

Right now, in Harrisburg, a new formula is being created by this committee of legislators and appointed citizens. Public comments on the formula are being accepted until Jan 11. Please take advantage of this opportunity to have your voice heard in this process. You can [submit your comments here](#).

Let's start a new chapter for PA public schools where each child, regardless of zip code, can have a quality public education.

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