

LWVCC January Updates

Hello Everyone! Surely, we can all agree that we are glad to see 2020 in our mental rear-view mirror. But what a beginning to 2021!

We certainly have our work cut out for us in the coming months, especially regarding voter education. First up is our 2021 Spring Municipal Primary on May 18. We will need volunteers to help get information out to Centre County voters on candidates and issues that may be on the ballot that would affect the entire state of PA.

For instance, consider the PA Constitutional amendment (HB38) regarding judicial districts. It was sent to the House Judicial Committee on January 11 and tabled on January 13, meaning no action was taken on this yet. We need to educate the public about what this amendment means: it would allow a coequal branch of government to have undue control over the judiciary and would likely lead to judicial gerrymandering similar to the legislative gerrymandering we are all too familiar with. Unless enough concerned voters let their respective legislators know their concerns about this amendment, it may pass both houses of the state legislature mid-February and appear as a referendum on the May 18 ballot. It would be much better to stop the amendment before it reaches the ballot. Municipal elections tend to have lower voter turnout and referendums often pass. This is not a partisan position. Whichever party controls the legislature may utilize this amendment to redraw judicial districts to their advantage.

Municipal elections are local elections. The May 18th primary ballots will include the offices of county DA, borough mayors and council members, township supervisors and school board members. These are powerful positions which affect voters' daily lives. Yet these elections have much lower voter turnout than state or national elections. We want to empower and engage our residents more and increase voter turnout in these important local contests. All registered voters in Centre County can vote in the 2021 Spring Municipal Primary. Voters registered as Republicans and Democrats can vote the entire ballot. All other voters are permitted to vote on referendums.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of our work will continue to be done virtually. We welcome and encourage you to participate in our democracy by writing letters to the editor. Be sure to mention your legislator and his/her position on whatever topic you are discussing. Email or call your legislators. Thank them if they have supported fair and responsible legislation. And if they are not doing the job to which they were elected, supporting good legislation that benefits PA residents, remind them that you are their constituent and that you vote.

There may also be opportunities to participate by making phone calls, sending postcards and/or distributing door hangers. Information that you can share with your contacts will be provided. You may also be able to join a LWVCC small group virtual interview with our legislators. We plan to continue to partner with appropriate community organizations to provide truthful, pertinent, and non-partisan information they can share with their members on topics pertinent to Centre County voters. We would

love to hear your ideas about what you would like to see LWVCC do and ways in which you want to participate. Please contact us at www.lwvcentrecounty.org. Happy New Year! Please stay healthy and safe!

Information and upcoming events

January 21 at 6:30 pm “The 2nd Letter: Virtual Community Call to Action”, a virtual panel presentation celebrating the legacy of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

•FB Link: <https://www.facebook.com/StateCollegeNAACP>

•YouTube Link: YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/CcN1-9M2o5Q>

January 26 at 7:00 pm “Antidote to Partisan Poison”, a virtual presentation that explains gerrymandering in the state legislature and the proposed constitutional amendment to create judicial court districts that may also be gerrymandered. Presented by Fair Districts PA through Schlow Library. We need informed citizens to reach out to legislators. [REGISTER HERE](#) to get the Zoom link the day of the event.

February 5 at 12:00 pm “REPRESENTATION MATTERS, A Conversation with People of Color in Public Service”. A virtual panel presentation by the Centre Women Leadership Coalition of the Community Diversity Group. Deadline to register for this event is February 1. Register at www.lwvcentrecounty.org.

March 7 by 5:00 pm. Deadline for our LWVCC chapter to nominate Centre County history, government or civics high school teachers to attend a free online professional development course taught by Harvard University Case Method Institute titled “The History of American Democracy.” Participants would receive the full curriculum of Harvard’s case studies free of charge as well as a professional development certificate. For more information or to submit your nominations to the LWVCC steering committee please visit our website www.lwvcentrecounty.org and submit your request or nomination under the contact us tab.