



# Chester County VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Chester County, PA

610-644-5960

[www.lwvccpa.org](http://www.lwvccpa.org)

*November/December 2015*

Keep up to date with the League! Sign up for updates at: [www.lwvccpa.org](http://www.lwvccpa.org)

Connect with us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LWVofChesterCounty](https://www.facebook.com/LWVofChesterCounty)

## President's Message

Susan Carty

[sc51446@aol.com](mailto:sc51446@aol.com)

Happy Holidays to All!

'Tis the season to give. And what valuable gifts we do give! Our time, energy and spirit are but a few of the presents we offer our community. The New Year promises to be at minimum, *memorable* and at best, *historical*, as our nation embarks on its mission to elect the next President of this country.

And we can't forget the significant backdrop to the Federal elections, the critically important State level elections. Who is speaking for us now, and who will speak for us in the future? The League will most definitely be giving our gifts long after the Holiday Season has ended.

The opportunity for us to perform our role through civic engagement, voter education and continued efforts to secure the modernization of the election process in Pennsylvania is here and it is now. History expects us to do no less!

Rest up! Enjoy your family and friends! Remember what this time of year is all about. Our freedoms, safety and Democracy are the gifts we hold most dear.

Thank you all for all that you do!

*Susan*

## Save the Date: Program Planning Meetings

Saturday, January 9, 2016

Northern: West Chester Borough Hall, 401 East Gay Street, West Chester  
10 AM to 1:30 PM

Southern: Kendal Farm House, 1109 Baltimore Pike, Kennett Square  
10 AM to 1:30 PM

### Voters Service

**Mary Lou Dondero**  
**610-692-3299**

October was a busy month for the League as we sponsored four “Meet the Candidates” events in various parts of Chester County:

October 24 – Tredyffrin Township Supervisors and Tredyffrin-Easttown School Board  
Susan Cody, Joan Bergquist, Margaret Dalesandro, Loraine Deisinger, Ann Hiller

October 24 – Borough Hall – West Chester  
Judicial candidates for Judge, Court of Common Pleas  
Pamela Gray, Carol Kuniholm, Cathy Palmquist, Diane LeBold

October 29 – Hillendale Elementary School – Chadds Ford  
Region C – Unionville-Chadds Ford School Board  
Charlotte Gosselink, Carol Bossert, Judy Tiller, Pat Horrocks, Chuck Gosselink, Janey Gifford

The debates in Tredyffrin received front page coverage in the “Region” section of “Mainline Suburban Life”. The other debates received front page coverage in “The Daily Local News”.

The Tredyffrin debates were taped and televised multiple times by Gene Donahue of the Township studio.

Pat Horrocks prepared a “Voters Guide” for distribution to county libraries.

November 6 – Registration of new citizens following their Naturalization ceremony at the Justice Center  
Mary Ann Twarog, Diane LeBold, Judi Bell

Many thanks to everyone who made these events possible!

The League is grateful to Exelon Generation for their continued support of our Legislative Directory and to our own Debra Gallek for her sponsorship of our bookmark.

## **Criminal Justice Committee**

On Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Hot Topics luncheon at the Media Municipal Community Center. The speaker was Jennifer Levy-Tatum, Chester County LWV. Ms. Levy-Tatum's presentation was 'A Lawyer's Views on Criminal Justice Reform'. It was a bird's eye view of justice in the United States the oft extreme disparity for a single crime, from state to state. That crime in Pennsylvania may be months or a few years where as that same crime may be 20 years in Georgia. Ergo, inequality resides between states and sometimes within states themselves. What may be accepted on a county level is not at a state level. How prisoners are treated at the county level versus the state is often extreme.

At the state level, prisoners are underrepresented due to the overload on the defenders. The prosecutor may "load" the deck against the prisoner, forcing the prison to plea bargain. This is not in the prisoner's best interests, especially if the prisoner is innocent.

Timeliness of trial is another misnomer. A prisoner may fester in jail for a matter of years before his or her trial reaches the court.

State prisons are also a money maker for the state. The prisoner must pay for such items as toothbrushes, deodorant, underwear, etc.

Bail is another issue. If the prisoner has no money, they remain in prison instead of being out on bail.

The cost of incarceration is over \$50,000 per prisoner.

There's much more. *To learn more, join the Chester County Criminal Justice committee.* You may learn what some state and local prisons are doing to rehabilitate prisoners and close the revolving door.

*Reported by Sarah Caspar*

## **Education**

Toni Keg

[akeg@verizon.net](mailto:akeg@verizon.net)

### **President Obama Signs New Education Legislation**

The legislation, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaces the expired Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, or No Child Left Behind/NCLB) and will directly affect nearly 50 million K-12 public school students and over 3 million teachers. Exactly how it will play out will vary from state to state.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Dr. Pedro Rivera commented on ESSA, noting that "many of the measures in the new law mirror the vision the governor has put forth for moving education forward in the commonwealth, including a focus on restoring equity, investing in high quality early childhood education, and reducing the reliance on standardized tests." <http://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/education-Details.aspx?newsid=199>

With US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan stepping down at the end of 2015, the transition to ESSA will take place under Acting Secretary John King, who serves as the current Deputy Secretary (and was former NY state education commissioner).

Waivers received from the NCLB law would be null and void on August 1, 2016, but states would still have to continue supporting their lowest-performing schools ("priority schools") and schools with big achievement gaps ("focus schools") until their new ESSA plans kicked in. In general, ESSA would apply to any competitive federal grants given out after October 1, 2016, so most grants would still be under the NCLB version of the law for the rest of this school year.

ESSA is over 1,000 pages but here are some highlights:

***Standards:***

- States would be required to adopt “challenging” academic standards and the US Secretary of Education would be expressly prohibited from forcing or even encouraging states to pick a particular set of standards (including the Common Core).

***Accountability:***

- States would still have to submit accountability plans to the Education Department - new ESSA plans start in the 2017-18 school year.
- States can pick their own goals, both long-term and smaller, interim goals. Goals must address: proficiency on tests, English-language proficiency, and graduation rates. Goals must set an expectation that all groups that are furthest behind close gaps in achievement and graduation rates.
- States would need to incorporate at least four indicators into their accountability systems, and must include three academic indicators: proficiency on state tests, English-language proficiency, plus some other academic factor that can be broken out by subgroup (such as growth on state tests). Elementary, middle and high schools are judged basically by the same set of indicators, except that high schools need to include graduation rates, which could take the place of a second academic indicator.
- States would be required to add at least one additional indicator of a different kind. Some possibilities: student engagement, educator engagement, access to/completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate/safety, etc.
- While it would be up to the states to decide how much the individual indicators will count, the academic factors (tests, graduation rates, etc.) would have to count "much" more (per ESSA language) as a group than the indicators concerned with opportunity to learn and post-secondary readiness.

### ***School Interventions/Low-Performing Schools:***

- States would have to identify and intervene in the bottom 5% of performers and also in high schools where the graduation rate is 67% or less. These schools would have to be identified at least once every three years and districts would work with teachers/school staff to come up with an evidence-based plan, with states monitoring the turnaround effort. If, after no more than four years, a school continues to struggle, the state would be required to step in with its own plan. Districts could also allow for public school choice out of seriously low-performing schools, giving priority to students who need it most.
- States, with districts, would have to identify schools where subgroups of students are struggling. In these cases, schools would have to come up with an evidence-based plan to help the particular group of students who are falling behind and districts would monitor these plans. If the school continues to fall short, the district would step in, but there is no specified timeline. Even with local interventions, states and districts must develop a “comprehensive improvement plan” in schools where subgroups are chronically underperforming.

### ***Testing:***

- States would still have to test students in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, and break out the data for whole schools, plus different “subgroups” of students (English-learners, students in special education, racial minorities, those in poverty). States would be prohibited from combining different sets of students into so-called “super subgroups” for accountability purposes.
- ESSA maintains the federal requirement for 95% participation in tests. States will have to take low testing participation into consideration in their accountability systems and can decide what happens in schools that miss targets. States could create their own testing opt-out laws.

### ***English-Language Learners:***

- Accountability for English-language learners moves from Title III, the English-language acquisition section of the former ESEA, to Title I, which houses all other accountability. The reasoning: make accountability for these students a priority.
- As under current law, states could include test scores of English-language learners after they have been in the country a year. However, during that first year, those test scores would not count towards a school’s rating. In the second year, the state would have to incorporate results for both reading and math, using some measure of growth. And in their third year in the country, the proficiency scores of newly arrived ELLs would be treated just like any other student.

### ***Special Education Students:***

- Only 1 % of students overall could be given alternative tests, which translates into about 10 % of students in special education.

### ***Teachers:***

- States would no longer have to do teacher evaluation through student outcomes and the NCLB's "highly qualified teacher" requirement is no more.
- The former Teacher Incentive Fund is now the Teacher and School Leader Innovation Program, and provides grants to districts that want to try out performance pay and other teacher-quality improvement measures.
- There are some changes to the Title II formula (funds teacher quality) that many feel will benefit rural states.

### ***And more:***

- New \$1.6 billion block grant consolidates many programs, including those involving physical education, Advanced Placement, school counseling, and technology.
- Preschool Development Grant program becomes law and broadens access to early-childhood education. The program will now be housed at the Department of Health and Human Services and jointly administered by the Education Department.
- School Choice pilot project allows 50 districts to try a weighted student-funding formula, combining state, local, and federal funds that would follow children to the school of their choice. Participation would be up to district officials, with flexibility aimed at letting them better target funds to individual school needs.
- Maintenance of effort, which requires states to keep up their own spending at a particular level in order to tap federal funds, remains in ESSA.
- New stand-alone programs for parent engagement, along with reservations for arts, gifted and talented education.

To read the bill and more details, visit the US Department of Education website: <http://www.ed.gov/esea>

## **Environmental & Conservation Issues**

**Alma Forsyth**  
610-388-1361

[jalkforsyth@verizon.net](mailto:jalkforsyth@verizon.net)

Protecting the Natural Resources – Clean Water and Clean Air – is the major issue globally.

In Pennsylvania, the issue is for municipalities to retain their right to protect the health, welfare and safety of their citizens. The system in Pennsylvania must be corrected in order to enable municipalities to lawfully strengthen their zoning ordinances. The citizens must support this effort and/ or encourage their local governments to take the necessary action.

Global efforts to protect the environment also requires that citizens must support all efforts , nationally and statewide. Contact your Congressman and Senators, and your PA Senators and Representatives to advise them that you are in favor of protecting the environment!

*Additional issues currently being addressed:*

U.S. Congress: EPA regulations to reduce carbon pollution. Tax Incentive Program to preserve our National Forests and Water Supply

Pennsylvania Legislature: Efforts to Protect your Constitutional Right to Clean Water and Clean Air

Please contact Alma Forsyth if you have any questions or need additional information.

## **Agriculture**

**Sarah Caspar and Mary Ciarrocchi, Co-Chairs**  
610 873 1237  
[scaspar@comcast.net](mailto:scaspar@comcast.net)

The Agriculture Committee has much to discuss.

A month ago, a member of the Agriculture Committee attended the bio fuel program at the E. Nantmeal Township building. We would like to put together a Power Point demo to show people how it works and how to build your own.

We would like to invite Karen Martinyk, Lancaster County Farm Trust and former Chester County Commissioner, to come as a guest speaker and the new President of the Grange.

On Saturday December 5, I went to a well-attended book signing of a cook book by chefs and owners of ZAHAV at the Chester County Food Bank. \$10 from each book went to the Food Bank. The book signing was sponsored by The Wellington Book Store.

Come join us at our next meeting and BRING US YOUR IDEAS.

## **Membership in the League Makes a Great Holiday Gift!**

**Chester County League of Women Voters needs YOUR support. Please join and/or renew your membership (details below) TODAY!**

**Talk to friends and neighbors about the League. Invite them to League events and share our publications, website and Facebook page. Through sharing our mission and work, every member can encourage at least 1 new member to join. Please give it a try!**

### **Membership**

**Patricia Schultz**

[pls@patriciaschultz.com](mailto:pls@patriciaschultz.com)

610-436-9752

If your goals are the same as our goals, membership will help you achieve them. Even if you haven't the time for active participation, your membership will help strengthen our voice. And if you cannot join us now, consider supporting the League with a donation. Or, for someone special, a GIFT MEMBERSHIP in the League is a great idea, especially around the holidays.

**Who Can Join?** Membership is open to everyone. Men, women, students, non-citizens - anyone who shares our philosophy and goals can join.

**Questions?** Contact Patricia Schultz 610-436-9752 or [pls@patriciaschultz.com](mailto:pls@patriciaschultz.com)

**Annual membership is \$75.** You can join by filling out the below form and return by mail to LWVCC at 1442 Pottstown Pike, #238, West Chester 19380 or join and pay online at [www.lwccpa.org](http://www.lwccpa.org)

**Donations Welcome!** Any amount is greatly appreciated and will help us continue our mission. If you are able, please consider 'rounding up' your membership - just check the Donation box on the form for the extra amount. Thank you!

## WHAT IS THE LEAGUE?

- A non-partisan political organization that does not support or oppose political parties or candidates.
- An activist organization that works to influence public policy on a variety of issues.
- An educational organization that encourages informed and active participation in government.

## WHAT DOES THE LEAGUE DO?

### Educates

- Researches critical and sometimes controversial matters of concern to our members.
- Provides information to members and the public about a variety of local, state and national issues.

### Takes Action

- Reports results of studies to members, policy makers and the public.
- Lobbies government officials on League positions established by study, discussion and consensus of members.

### Gets Out the VOTE !

- Encourages participation of citizens in the electoral process through voter registration, Voters Guides, candidate forums and the Internet.

## HOW CAN YOU JOIN THE LEAGUE?

- Complete and mail this membership form along with the appropriate dues. A gift membership is a great idea for someone special.
- Or for more information:
  - Go to our website: [www.lwvccpa.org](http://www.lwvccpa.org)
  - Ask a League member for help.
  - Or call 610-644-5960.



## WHO ARE LEAGUE MEMBERS?

- Men and women of all ages.
- Students and retirees.
- Homemakers and business owners.
- Legislators and community organizers.
- Teachers, doctors, lawyers and more.
- Membership open to all. Please join us.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

### Personal Growth

- Meet people who want to support constructive change.
- Sharpen your skills or develop new ones in areas of management, communications and public speaking. Learn how to lead a meeting, moderate a debate or run for public office.
- Network as you enter a world of personal, professional and political opportunities.
- Develop personal friendships.
- Make a difference in your community.

### Community Involvement

- Be informed about what is happening in government and politics at home, in Harrisburg and Washington.
- Get involved in the League's public service efforts, candidate forums, workshops, conferences and voter registration.
- Influence decision-making.
- Have an impact on governmental decisions that directly affect you, your family and your community.
- Work with other community groups.

\_\_\_ Individual or Gift Membership  
\$75.00

\_\_\_ Second member in same  
household: \$37.50

\_\_\_ Student Membership \$20.00

\_\_\_ Send VOTER by Email (members) or

\_\_\_ Send VOTER by U.S. Mail (members)

\_\_\_ Please send me information about the  
League of Women Voters Chester Co.

\_\_\_ I cannot join now, but am enclosing a  
contribution to support League activities  
in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Send information about advertising  
and sponsorship opportunities.

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Name (s)  
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Address  
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City

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Township

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State

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Zip Code

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Email Address  
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Telephone (s)  
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Checks payable to LWVCC and mail to:

LWVCC  
1442 Pottstown Pike, #238  
West Chester, PA 19380

Because we lobby at the local, state and national levels,  
membership dues and other contributions to the LWVCC are not  
tax-deductible. Contributions to the League of Women Voters CC  
Education Fund are tax-deductible.

[www.lwvccpa.org](http://www.lwvccpa.org)

## **November/December Highlights in US Women's History**

*November 1, 1848:* First medical school for women, the New England Female Medical School, opens; in 1874 it merges with Boston University to become one of the world's first coed medical schools.

*November 8, 1910:* The state of Washington passes a constitutional amendment to permit woman suffrage.

*November 8, 1984:* Dr. Anna L. Fisher, a physician, launches into space as the first American mother and third American woman to fly into space on the shuttle Discovery.

*November 11, 1979:* Bethune Museum and Archives opens in Washington D.C. D.C. as a center for African-American women's history, honoring Mary McLeod Bethune.

*November 11, 1993:* The Vietnam Women's Memorial is dedicated in Washington, D.C. Conceived by former army combat nurse Diane Carlson Evans and sculpted by Glenna Goodacre, it honors the 265,000 women who voluntarily served during the Vietnam era.

*November 13, 1938:* Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini is beatified. She is the first American woman citizen to become a saint.

*November 14, 1889:* Journalist Elizabeth Cochran, aka Nellie Bly, sails around the world in 72 days, 6 hours, 11 minutes, and 14 seconds, beating the fictional record set by Phileas Fogg in Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

*November 14, 1903:* The U.S. Women's Trade Union League is established.

*November 14, 1946:* Emily Greene Balch, co-founder of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

*November 28, 1881:* The first organizational meeting is held for the predecessor group to the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

*December 1, 1955:* Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a bus to a white person; her arrest sparks the modern civil rights movement in the US

*December 5, 1935:* Mary McLeod Bethune creates the National Council of Negro Women

*December 7, 1941:* Capt. Annie Fox receives the first Purple Heart awarded to a woman for her service while under attack at Pearl Harbor

*December 10, 1869:* Wyoming is the first territory to give women the right to vote

*December 10, 1938:* Pearl S. Buck receives the Nobel Prize for Literature for *The Good Earth*

*December 13, 1993:* Susan A. Maxman becomes first woman president of the American Institute of Architects in its 135 year history

*December 14, 1961:* President's Commission on the Status of Women is established to examine discrimination against women and ways to eliminate it

*December 14, 1985:* Wilma Mankiller is sworn in as principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma – the first woman in modern history to lead a major Native American tribe

*December 17, 1993:* Judith Rodin is named president of Univ. of Pennsylvania, the first woman to head an Ivy League institution

*December 28, 1967:* Muriel Siebert becomes the first woman to own a seat on the N.Y. Stock Exchange

Check out more at The National Women's History Project: <http://www.nwhp.org/>

**League Board Meetings occur on the third Saturday of the month.** ALL members are welcome and encouraged to bring a friend. Board meetings are a great forum to introduce prospective members to the positive work of the League.

**Location: West Chester Borough Hall, 401 East Gay Street, West Chester**

**Time: 10 AM – noon**

**League of Women Voters of PA: [www.palwv.org](http://www.palwv.org) 717-234-1576**

**League of Women Voters United States: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) 202-429-1965**



*A monthly Update from the Water Resources Education Network  
a project of the League of Women Voters of PA - Citizen Education Fund*

<http://wren.palwv.org/wren/index.html>

The VOTER is published every *other* month during the year and relies heavily on committee chairs and members for reports, summaries, announcements and comments submitted to the VOTER – thanks to all for their contributions.

**DISCLAIMER – The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates running for office or political parties. Any use of the League of Women Voters’ name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.**

**Horrocks**  
**194 Phillips Mill Rd.**  
**Cochranville, Pa. 19330**

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