



January 2023

lwvccpa.org

A Message from the President

Dear Members and Supporters,

We have something to be Proud of and to Celebrate!

The League is now **103 Years Old!** Yes, it really is. Could we be the oldest non-partisan, non-profit, dedicated to the empowerment of all to participate in our democracy? Aren't we just getting started?

How would those suffragettes feel today about the long-term and sustained results of their selfless and at times quite dangerous efforts? Did they consider the **concepts of absentee ballots, mail-in voting, voter ID, early voting or voter purges** to name a few? And yet, what have we not thought of?

The changes from the 1920s are huge and inspiring. Yet along with the good comes the reality of the bad. Today we continue to see efforts to suppress, efforts to eliminate and/or manipulate who can vote, when they vote as well as where they vote. Imagine if all those deceitful, self-gratifying efforts were actively applied to the issues that lift all voters up? **Imagine....**

We, as the League will continue to actively work on" a vision of a more inclusive democracy where all Americans, regardless of gender, sex, race, ability or party can see themselves represented in our government." **We have "miles" to go.**

Consider joining in with our developing efforts to expand what we do and how we do it! Your thoughts and experiences are encouraged!

Don't hesitate to call or email your interest in working with us. We have only just begun!

Stay safe and stay healthy!

Susan Carty, LWVCC President

Notices

Upcoming Dates:

LWVCC Board Meeting, Saturday February 18, 10:00AM East Goshen Twp. Building, 1580 Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA 19380

This will be a hybrid meeting.

WE NEED LIAISONS

Google's English Dictionary

Liaison - communication or cooperation which facilitates a close working relationship between people or organizations.

At our last board/planning/holiday meeting on January 21, 2023, we discussed the need for a greater exchange of ideas and information between members. In other words, we need more liaisons to gather relevant information to share with and educate our chapter members. In order to better educate and empower our voters, our members need to be aware of issues that are priorities of the League.

There are so many resources* available to us and volunteer liaisons are needed to bring the valuable information back to our chapter. Liaisons then share what they learned at a board meeting or in our newsletter. If you would like to be a liaison or learn more, please contact one of our board members to discuss details.

*Some of the current resources:

PA State LWV Voters Service Meetings

PA State LWV Environmental Meetings

Fair District Meetings

Other LWV Chapter Websites and Newsletters

Elected Officials Press Releases

Environmental Policy News

Mattel is taking back old worn out toys to they can re-use parts and keep old yours out of landfills. Wonderful program that supports the Zero Waste Initiative.

https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/bltc12136c3b9f23503/bltc23dcc685588901f/629e8e468eeef9457276578a/M22_PLAY_BACK_FAQ_US_052422.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3AweFUB08-mf47zwJ-VMX9MKMN2iA_EbJMpsIYMZ8RKkBILxWUJrs12_8

The Allegheny County Council meets on Single-use plastic bag bans on February 15 from 5:00-6:00PM. See the link below. There may be a recording of this meeting as well.

<https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/events/allegheny-county-council-hearing-on-single-use-plastics/>

Submitted by Carole Macrell

HELP WANTED: Or, more ways to Liaison

The League needs you! We live in a very busy and issue saturated world. Keeping up is quite challenging for our busy families.

Please consider taking on a one-time or more role as a liaison from the League to observe your local school district board meeting(s). Or, how about your township meeting(s)? Or, possibly our county Commissioner meetings? This liaison role is only that of listener not speaker unless indicated otherwise. We would then ask you to attend the following League board meeting to tell the board of your experience. Report forms are being developed for your use. Please feel free to call the League with interest and ideas.

As always...Thank you for All You Do!

“Expungement” What is it and why is it important?

Besides being a member of the Chester County League of Women Voters I am also a member of the West Chester Branch of the NAACP. When asked to sign up for a committee I chose Criminal Justice. The League also has a position (page 23 in your Membership Handbook) on Criminal Justice, so it seemed like a good fit. An Expungement Clinic was held on January 20 at the Melton Center sponsored by Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania and the West Chester NAACP. It started with a very informative presentation by the lead lawyer explaining expungement. The American Bar Association defines ‘expungement’ as the process by which a record of criminal conviction is destroyed. Any felony or misdemeanor conviction can be expunged if there has been no criminal supervision in the last ten years.

Why does expungement matter? It seals your criminal record from public view. It protects your privacy and allows you to take advantage of more and better employment and education opportunities. It allows for more housing options, access to public assistance, lower insurance rates, and the ability to volunteer in the community.

What can you do to help? Currently there are bills in the state House and Senate related to expanding ‘Clean Slate’, HB 1826, SB 1314. Stay tuned, we are also promoting the right to vote for people affected by present or past incarceration.

Pam Gray

Membership

ARE YOUR DUES UP TO DATE?

It's not too early to get to work for the year ahead. We will be voting for Judges, Row Offices, Special Elections and more. We continue to need your support to educate, encourage and empower our voters who depend on the League throughout the year. Thank you if your dues are up to date for 2022/2023. You are welcome to email me to double check the status of your membership. Meryle Rothman mgrothman@verizon.net.

BTW - League memberships make great gifts all year long, but especially to acknowledge and celebrate the League's 103rd anniversary on Feb 14, 2023. Think about someone that you

The Voter Needs You Too!

I have been putting the Voter together for a few months now. Most of what you see is sent to me by members or is information I have picked up from trusted sites that are connected with the League. If you are on a committee, please send me a report of your activities. Or, if you happen to find information that is pertinent to our mission, send it along. Also, everyone can attend board meetings and I have been making them available virtually to encourage the general membership to attend and be aware of League activities and decisions. Please consider attending the upcoming planning meeting either in person or on Zoom. Your input and energy would be greatly appreciated.

Elaine Friedlander

Humanity in Jails and Prisons

In 1995 state psychiatric hospitals held 500,000 people with severe mental illness.

In 2020 jails and prisons contained approximately 356,000 inmates with severe mental illness. Ten times more mentally ill are in the criminal justice system than in a psychiatric hospital. Is it morally right to expect mentally ill to follow the rules and regulations in jail or prison like non-mentally ill prisoners? Most mentally ill persons need treatment to assist them to function positively.

Mentally ill people are locked up because their behavior is seen as a potential to do harm to self or others. Jails and prisons have become the largest asylum.

Current US recidivism after nine years of prison is 83%. Why does this occur?

On the average day 451,000 people are held in pre-trial jails. This costs local governments \$13.6 million. People who are held in jails pre-trial have not been convicted of a crime. The majority are not a risk to the community. Is our criminal justice system in favor of humane treatment?

In the US people who have committed a violent crime remain in a jail pre-trial stay in jail for an average of 7 months. Those who have not committed a violent crime stay an average of 3 months. There is loss of jobs, lack of rent for their living arrangements before jail, disruption of family life.

People in jail pre-trial develop loss of sense of self and feel helpless. They are ten times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

Upon entering prison, unruly behavior is a pass to solitary confinement. In 2014 people were held in solitary confinement for 22-23 hours a day for 30 days.

Loneliness is a destroyer of humanity. It is a goal to have the prisoner to feel fear, dread, and hopelessness. Also, this punitive act's goal is for the prisoner to repent for the crime they have committed. Is it healthy to treat prisoners this way?

Humans need connection with others. When we take that away in solitary

confinement, people's sense of self is challenged and self-injurious behavior is likely to occur. Psychiatric symptoms of depersonalization and derealization develop. Prisoner's ability to discern reality is compromised. What alternative correction could we utilize?

Society's goals should be justice, fairness, and safety. Our goal as a society should be to assist the prisoner to develop skills that will assist them to be a productive member of society upon release from prison. But do we rehabilitate prisoners? During incarceration people need to develop skills to help them adjust to being out of prison as a productive, safe person. There needs to be an assessment of factors that may have led to a breakdown in the person's coping mechanisms and increased the likelihood of committing a crime. After incarceration, we want people to get a job, have money to pay rent, to give them skills to socialize. In our society too often the purpose of imprisonment is seen as a form of punishment, revenge, payment for negative and dangerous behaviors. However, we as a society have the obligation to focus on the future as well. We can't change the past, but we can, hopefully, alter the future. Things that need to occur is the use of a daily schedule, taking medications if prescribed, shop for groceries, follow the rules on a job, have positive interaction with others. To rehabilitate a person is an investment in the safety and harmony of our society.

Kay Sharp, Criminal Justice Committee

(Source: "Waiting for An Echo" by Christine Montross, M.D.)

Fix Harrisburg

Now we need to make sure ALL of our representatives get that message. Together, we *can* fix Harrisburg.

Contact your representative:

Find contact details [here](#). Then draft your message. Here are some key points to consider.

- We appreciate that Speaker Rozzi took time to listen to the public about legislative rules.
-
- We want rules that ensure bipartisan solutions get a vote in committee, on the floor and in the opposite chamber. Reference some (or all!) of the [FDPA recommended rules](#).
- We can't afford another session where important issues, with strong bipartisan support, never get a final vote.
-

Contact the offices of the Caucus Leaders:

- Leader Joanna E. McClinton (D) 717-772-9850 jmclinton@pahouse.net
- Leader Bryan Cutler (R) 717-783-6424 bcutler@pahousegop.com

The message is the same as to your own representatives, but acknowledging that the leaders are the ones who will be negotiating and deciding. Ask for their leadership in rules that encourage collaboration and bipartisan.

Fair rules will lead to a legislative process that may allow our representatives to finally tackle the pressing issues that trouble you and your community. **Now is your chance to help make that happen.**

For more info and links read our web update: [Speaker's Listening Tour: Statewide Testimony in Favor of Rules Reform](#)

Carol Kuniholm

Fair Districts PA Chair