



March 2023

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A Message from the President

Dear Members and Supporters,

Welcome Spring! We celebrate the annual arrival of new growth, warmer temperatures and long sunlit days. Spring is nature's embodiment of hope as well as anticipation.

Just like Nature's Spring our Nation's voters experience a similar type of hope and anticipation through the appearance of new or renewed political candidates seeking our shared hope and support for their success in future elections.

Just like Nature, we voters struggle more than ever to find that "best" light and that most supportive environment nurtured with "real" truths promising fair and just futures for all citizens.

Yet today we watch the downfall of a national news giant. A giant that gained its success through hourly untruthful presentations to millions of viewers. What does this revelation do to our national future? How do we measure the damage? Will that damage ever be repaired? Will we know the truth? Does "truth" have new alternate definitions? And last but not least, how will this revelation impact future voters?

No doubt about it, The League of Women Voters has a great deal of work to do. The depth and breadth of our mission continues to be highly impacted by today's revelations. Join us in our work!

We will all be glad that you did.

In truth, In League,

Susan Carty, President, LWVCC

Notices

Upcoming Dates:

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

This will **not** be a hybrid meeting.

LWVCC annual dinner, evening June 22, see page 3

Legislative News

Pennsylvania has a new Speaker of the House!!! Joanna McClinton, Representative of the 191 District is the new Speaker of the House. She is the first woman and only the second African-American in the Pennsylvania House, the nation's oldest legislative body. McClinton is a resident of Philadelphia and has served in the House since 2015 representing parts of West Philadelphia and Delaware County. She is a graduate of Villanova Law School, a former attorney for the Defender Association of Philadelphia, and worked as General Counsel for Senator Anthony Williams prior to running for office. She became the minority leader in 2020, and was voted majority leader earlier this year. Many expected her to win the speakership after the results of the 2022 election. The leadership change came when Representative Mark Rozzi, a Berks County Democrat, stepped aside having been speaker for only three months. Upon being sworn in, McClinton stated, "It was almost 250 years before a woman could stand at this desk, not just to pray, but to get the gavel." "That's pretty incredible." We wish Joanna well and much success.

Submitted by Val Thomas

Environmental Policy News

Good news for environmental advocacy groups. On Feb. 22, 2023 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court handed down a major decision in two suits.

The decision is a victory for the environmental organizations, who had sought but been denied reimbursement for their legal costs from Sunoco Pipeline, the builder of the controversial Mariner East pipelines. It is also a victory for the Gerhart family, landowners along the pipeline route who stood up to the company and also had success at the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board.

You can read the details here: <https://enviropolitics.com/environmental-advocates-celebrate-big-victory-with-pennsylvania-supreme-court-decision/>

Submitted by Carole Macrell

Information about the **next Pennsylvania farm bill** can now be found on our website: How the LWV can support sustainable and equitable food system in the face of climate change.

<https://lwwccpa.org/>

Save the Date!

The Chester County League of Women Voters will be holding our annual dinner on the evening of June 22 nd at the Hilton Garden Inn.

It is located at 720 Eagleview Blvd, Exton, PA.

Good food, great company, and an interesting speaker!

More information to follow!

LWV and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Chester County LWV is looking for a member-volunteer to join our PA LWV Equity Support Team. The team meets monthly on the first Thursday at 7:00pm via Zoom. It's an opportunity to meet League members from across the state, learn about LWV DEI efforts, and help develop strategies to improve DEI across the state in our own Chester County League. For more information, talk to Sandy Schaal or President Susan Carty who are currently on the Equity Support team.

DEI webinars open to all are sponsored by the PA LWV every 4th Monday evening at 6:00pm via Zoom. On March 27, the topic will be **LGBTQ+**, on April 24 the discussion will focus on **Environmental and Climate Justice**, and the May 22 DEI webinar will feature a discussion in preparation for the June 16-18 Convention. You can register for all of these events [here](#).

West Chester Area School District—School Board Report

At the February meeting of the WCASD School Board, Director, Dr. Kate Shaw announced her resignation from the school board effective immediately. Dr. Shaw has been a director for eight years during which time she has been an effective advocate for all students. The board is seeking applicants to replace Dr. Shaw until the end of her term, December 2023. Acting Director of Equity, Dr. Una Martin's contract was extended for an additional year, postponing the search for a permanent Director of Equity.

The Acting Director of Equity, Dr. Una Martin gave an update of her activities to the Education Committee of the WCASD School Board in February. She reported that her priorities moving forward are to work with building level teams to develop metrics for measuring results, provide data to support the impact of recommendations that have been implemented, and to launch a parent and community partnership of mentors and tutors. A proposal to decrease leveling of sixth grade language arts classes was also discussed at the Education Committee meeting. It drew comments from a number of parents most of whom objected to the proposal.

Submitted by Sandy Schaal

Fair Districts PA

On March 1, the House gathered to consider rules for the remainder of the session. In most past sessions, the vote on rules has been hurried through with little discussion and scant attention. This year, that vote was preceded by weeks of attention with Speaker Mark Rozzi's Listening Tour, plus extended discussion in both caucuses.

More details on process and outcome are available in [our latest Fair Districts PA update](#).

The bottom line: there are changes to the rules that will make it more likely for bipartisan solutions to receive a vote.

There are also changes to protect the constitutional amendment process and to allow minority members more voice in committee.

An important change receiving much public attention: for the first time ever, the rules include protections against discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, in any interactions with PA House representatives "in or on House designated offices, property or facilities; or at a House-sponsored meeting or event."

As might be expected, some legislators, long accustomed to rules benefiting their party, are complaining loudly about changes. In reality the changes will benefit members of both parties, no matter who holds the majority. More importantly, the changes open the door to more robust representation and the hope that needed reforms may find an avenue forward.

Better House rules won't ensure action in the Senate. And even with better rules, voter attention will be needed.

We are celebrating significant progress, but there's still much work to do.

Join us as we continue to work for redistricting reform, fair legislative rules and a legislative process that serves the people of Pennsylvania well.

Carol Kuniholm

Fair Districts PA Chair

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, 2023. Think about someone that you know who you would like to honor with this special gift.

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 board meeting either in person or on Zoom (no Zoom in March). Your input and energy would be greatly appreciated.

Elaine Friedlander, euterpe89@gmail.com