



April, 2023

lwvccpa.org

A Message from the President

Dear Members and Supporters,

Welcome to our OFFICIAL SPRING! The air has changed, and nature is reminding us that she is still here! What a beautiful and reaffirming visual for the return of hope with the anticipation of better to come.

For the League, the coming of spring is the reminder of elections soon to come. At the same time, you surely will have noticed that our TV News Stations are buzzing with revelations of political chicanery and far-reaching examples of how not to support our long fought for Democracy.

What are the ultimate goals of these apparent bad behaviors? Discouragement of the electorate to act on their right to vote? Distortion of truths? Penning of future legislation impacting our full and equal access to the ballot box? Creation of fear? Distrust? Suspicion? To what purpose? To what outcome?

Most likely one primary aim is to create voters' great disappointment as well as confusion, tragically leading to voter INACTION.

That surely is NOT who we are! History reveals where in the world those nefarious efforts took hold. No formation of Democracy ever resulted.

Further division of the electorate merely strengthens and supports the lack of unity. And to be certain, unity is the critical factor needed to protect our countries' way of self-government. We must help our voters see vividly, hear clearly and understand fully that all efforts to shut voters down are for no good purposes.

Instead, get out there and VOTE!

Stay well – stay committed.

Susan Carty, President LWVCC

Notices

Upcoming Dates:

LWVCC Board Meeting, Saturday April 15, 10:00AM East Goshen Twp. Building, 1580 Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA 19380. For the near future we will have in-person meetings only.

LWVCC annual dinner, evening June 22,

COME ONE! COME ALL!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHESTER COUNTY

Annual Meeting

June 22, 2023

Registration at 5:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Celeste Trusty, Speaker

PA State Director, Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM)

\$35.00 plus cash Bar

Hilton Garden Inn

720 East Eagleview Blvd.

Exton, PA 19341

Send check to LWVCC; P.O. Box 62; Exton, PA 19341

OR by visiting PayPal on our website www.lwccpa.org

Environmental Policy News

Rail Pollution Protection

THE PROBLEM:

You probably heard that Norfolk Southern broke no laws in connection with the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment. That's the problem: corporate greed and regulatory failure have once again put the public at risk.

THE OPPORTUNITY:

Because of heightened awareness of the catastrophic outcomes resulting from train derailments, we finally have an opportunity to win major safety improvements in the U.S. rail industry.

This information was submitted by Carole Mackell from the Rail Pollution Protection Pittsburgh Organization. The complete article can be found at <https://us19.campaign-archive.com/?u=b25f02b9dabedbaa760931a14&id=68a3adc35d>

[CLICK HERE](#) if you want to tell our elected officials to close the loopholes in the Bipartisan Railway Safety Act of 2023, and to protect people rather than polluters.

The Voter Needs You !

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. It has been decided to discontinue the hybrid option for the time being since COVID numbers are down. You can still attend in person. Your input and energy would be greatly appreciated.

Elaine Friedlander, euterpe89@gmail.com

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 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](#).

INTRO TO BRAVER ANGELS: CROSSING THE DIVIDE

April 15 @ 9:00am
The Malvern Public Library
1 E 1 st Ave, Malvern, PA

The Malvern Public Library is hosting a special program on April 15 at 9:00am entitled Intro to Braver Angels: Crossing the Divide. This special program will introduce attendees to the Braver Angels movement which seeks to depolarize American politics. Attendees will learn about local and national initiatives as well as test drive activities from Braver Angels workshops. Although free, pre-registration is required. To learn more and register, please go to www.malvern-library.org/calendar.

About Braver Angels

Braver Angels is a nonpartisan movement that rejects the normalizing of extreme polarization as well as the breakdown of political and social life that it brings. Braver Angels' mission is to build civic trust in the USA, heal the wounds between left and right, and bring Americans together to bridge the partisan divide. It is about challenging institutions to be better, building community together, and discovering what it means to be American in our time. To learn more about Braver Angels, please visit their website at:

www.braverangels.org

Fair Districts PA

[Sign up for a shift as a Polling Place Outreach volunteer](#)

On Primary Day (May 16th, 2023), we will once again be collecting signatures for our Fix Harrisburg Petition. Shifts are 3-4 hours long, in a polling place near you - or if you're willing to drive, in a targeted area where we need to grow. Volunteering with Fair Districts PA means you'll be working in a totally nonpartisan capacity. All training and materials are provided.

Help us recruit 2023 Fix Harrisburg interns

Last summer we had three interns: one in Philadelphia, one in Huntingdon County and another in Somerset County. We're hoping to at least double that this summer. Interns join volunteers at fairs, festivals and community days to explain the Fix Harrisburg message, collect petition signatures and distribute materials about PA's legislative process. It's a paid, part-time, totally non-partisan opportunity. [Find information here.](#)

Next steps in redistricting

Since the 2022 redistricting process ended we've been focusing heavily on the legislative process and the Fix Harrisburg message but are also quietly working on next steps in redistricting. We'll be holding a Zoom forum on May 31, along with some statewide partners, to take a preliminary look at what we've been learning and what comes next for redistricting reform. Watch for more information on that soon, including sign-up instructions.

We still have much work to do. Thank you for all you do to help strengthen democracy here in Pennsylvania.

Carol Kunniholm

Fair Districts PA Chair



Criminal Justice Report

In our adversarial legal system, a lawyer is essential. So when the government charges a person with a crime and threatens to take away their freedom, the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution guarantees them the right to an attorney. On March 18, 1963, in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, the Supreme Court unanimously stated the rather “obvious truth” that a poor person could not receive a fair trial without a lawyer.

But sixty years later, Pennsylvania remains the only state in the nation that provides no state funding to public defender offices. Last week, just days after Joanna McClinton became the first woman and first public defender elected Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Governor Josh Shapiro proposed his first budget. Contained within is a rather simple and long overdue solution to help reduce over incarceration and divert people and taxpayer dollars from the criminal system; funding public defenders.

Because of chronic underfunding, public defenders are often paid less than district attorneys (aka prosecutors) to handle heavy workloads, with fewer essential support staff, like investigators and social workers. As a result “meet 'em and plead 'em”—where brief in-court exchanges between overworked and under-resourced public defenders can lead their clients, regardless of their ultimate guilt or innocence, to plead guilty rather than face a better-paid and better-resourced prosecutor, at trial—is the reality for many indigent defendants.

It is a reality where inadequate communications and inadequate investigations can lead to innocent people being locked up, here costly and rarely successful appeals are their only redress. A reality where thousands of Pennsylvania families are forced into debt and onto welfare rolls each year, desperately scrambling to support their loved ones, whether it be through funding commissary accounts for basic food and hygiene or paying exorbitant rates for phone calls. As long as people too poor to afford their own lawyers are denied meaningful representation in court, over incarceration will continue to devastate their communities. And while it is true many private attorneys and public defenders are neither recognized nor rewarded for their sometimes heroic efforts on behalf of their cash-strapped clients; their heroism and charity should not and can not be relied on to guarantee every defendant’s constitutional rights.

Governor Shapiro’s budget proposes a modest annual \$10 million funding stream to help support public defender services around the state. (In comparison, he proposed nearly \$3 billion dollars for our 23 state prisons, with additional spending of approximately \$2 billion on county jails and

prisons.) On behalf of the thousands of men and women in prison solely because they lacked adequate legal assistance (and their loved ones waiting for them to come home), the overworked and understaffed correctional employees tasked with supervising them and ensuring their safety, and all Pennsylvanians who pay the approximately \$5 billion on our prisons , It's about time!

Anton Andrew is former public defender and Education and Advocacy Fellow at The Pennsylvania Prison Society--the independent monitor of the Commonwealth’s prisons

ARE YOU ARE **FED UP** WITH **CORRUPT** POLITICIANS & PARTIES THAT PASS LAWS TO HELP THEMSELVES AND HURT EVERYONE ELSE?

JOIN US FOR A PRESENTATION & GROUP ACTION:



HOSTED BY: **MARCH ON HARRISBURG** [WWW.MOHPA.ORG/
DISRUPT-THE-CORRUPT](http://WWW.MOHPA.ORG/DISRUPT-THE-CORRUPT)

MAY 18TH

7:00 PM

DOORS OPEN AT 6:30
Refreshments will be available



SPEAKER: RABBI MICHAEL POLLACK
Executive Director of March on Harrisburg

Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County

145 West Rose Tree Road, Media, PA, 19063

Are you outraged by the fact that there are no limits on what a lobbyist can give to a public official in PA? So is Rabbi Pollack, and members of March on Harrisburg- a nonpartisan grassroots organization pushing for ethical reforms like the Gift Ban Bill, HR 484. Learn how to get involved and participate in a group action. No matter the social issues you care about, corruption obstructs progress!

RSVP HERE



LEARN HOW **CORRUPTION**
WORKS IN PA.

LEARN HOW TO MAKE
CORRUPTION ILLEGAL IN PA.