



October, 2023

lwvccpa.org

## A Message from the President

Election Season 2023 is in full throttle! Candidate mailers, election reminders, phone calls, events in the news accompanied by candidate yard signs everywhere.

My sincerest gratitude to all local League members who attended and helped during the recent public forums that took place on October 4th for the WCASD School Board Candidates in West Chester and on October 9th for the Downingtown School District School Board Candidates in Chester Springs. Your presence contributed to well organized, focused and respectful events.

High school students from Downingtown School District were the initiators of the DASD forum. We are proud of them for their interest as well as their initiative! Future voters and future leaders!

I too was honored with the request to act as moderator for both events. The candidates were asked questions that had been prepared by the League as well as questions submitted by the audience and the students. Candidates communicated details about their life experiences, qualifications and reasons for running for the office of School Board member. All candidates were respectful of each other.

We extend our appreciation and gratitude to all candidates who not only agreed to participate but committed to abide by the LWVCC procedures and protocols for such panels.

Both events set the stage for candidates from all parties to be heard by respectful audiences whose attendance offered visible support for the candidates. We look forward to supporting and offering these public events in the future!

Now, we all must encourage voters to act on their right to vote. Act with knowledge and act with determination. Let no one discourage or impede your vote. Those that attempt to do so are on the losing side of the scale. The young people are watching. Susan Carty

## Notices

Upcoming Dates:

**LWVCC Board Meeting**, Saturday October 21, 10:00AM, East Goshen Twp. Building, 1580 Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA 19380. For the near future we will have in-person meetings only.

### Here Are Some Election Day Reminders

Election Day is less than a month away, and the Chester County Department of Voter Services reminds voters of important dates and information. The last day to register to vote in person for the November 7 Election is Monday, October 23, and the last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot is Tuesday, October 31. For everything you need to know about election dates, videos of the election process, voter referendum questions, and the location of your polling place, go to [chesco.org/elections](https://chesco.org/elections).



### Artificial Intelligence and Election Security

To protect election infrastructure and personnel from AI-generated threats, election offices and vendors must implement the best practices that experts have been urging for over a decade.

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/artificial-intelligence-and-election-security>

### Redistricting Reform

- **Monday, November 6 at 6:30 pm – Downingtown Public Library**
- ***Redistricting Reform: What Happens Now?*** (In-person presentation) **Presenter: Mark Pavlovich** For more information: <https://www.fairdistrictspa.com/events/2023/11/06/redistricting-reform-what-happens-now>



Some of us visited Harrisburg on October 3 to deliver a report on the first quarter of the 2023-2024 legislative session: **Off to a slow start: PA's legislative process 2023**. After visits to every legislative office, we held a press conference in the capitol rotunda to share some highlights. You can find an update and video of the event [here](#).

Some legislators we met were eager to talk. Some less so. As usual, some ignored us. But all continue to make our points for us:

- Lack of progress on a still-incomplete budget process.
- Manipulation of legislative rules to push late-night amendments.
- A deepening partisan divide.

**It doesn't need to be that way.** As the report points out, there are part-time legislatures that regularly complete their budgets on time and pass hundreds of bills, with little drama, in just a matter of weeks.

In drawing district maps, deciding legislative agendas, setting budget priorities — in every part of our civic life — the rules need to work for all of us, no matter who is in charge. **When one party rigs the rules to keep power, when one party rams through their own agenda without including the other, we all lose. Every time.**

### **NOTHING WILL CHANGE UNLESS VOTERS DEMAND BETTER.**

That's what some legislators have told us, and we know it's true. But we also know nothing will change unless legislators **themselves** demand better as well. Some of them are eager to do that. Some need convincing. Some need to know there are voters in their own districts tired of the dysfunctional status quo. They need to know voters are paying attention and expect real representation.

### **TWO WAYS YOU CAN HELP NOW:**

**1. Read the report and share it with your own legislators.** They received a copy and also received a link in an email from me on the day of the press conference.

But our legislators are busy, and many don't read much unless it comes from their own constituents. So send an email with your OWN request for a more functional legislative process. Explain why you're sharing the link: <https://tinyurl.com/slowstart2023>.

Find your legislators and contact info [here](#). If you receive a substantive response, please share it [here](#).

### **2. Sign up to help with Polling Place Outreach on Election Day, November 7.**

Help collect petition signatures as voters exit their polling place. Let us know how far you can travel and what time(s) you're available. We'll match you with a high-turnout poll in an area where we need to grow. The more volunteers we have, the more new people we can connect with. Every conversation is a step toward a stronger, more informed nonpartisan advocacy movement — a great antidote to angry antagonism or cynical withdrawal.

Find more details and sign up [here](#).

# Environment Committee

Chester County's first Sustainability Conference was held on September 26. The goals are to re-adapt, reuse and recycle. The County now has a Sustainability Office under the CC Planning Commission headed by Rachel Griffiths. In 2021 Chester County adopted a Climate Action Plan to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050.

The Keynote presentation addressed Sustainability vs. Economic Development from the speaker's work in NYC. She is now with the Delaware River Commission. The speed share slides were from organizations implementing sustainability in various ways.

[Keynote Presentation: The Path to Sustainability- Ariella Maron, Executive Director, DVRPC](#)

[Speed Share Presentation](#)

The Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia also wanted to let everyone know about their [Sustainable and Local tour of East Passyunk](#) coming up this weekend. The event will highlight local values-driven businesses, and visitors can shop locally while positively impacting the environment and local communities.

[Plan your Work and Work your Plan: Sustainability Planning and Implementation for Businesses, Institutions, Non-profits, and Municipaliti](#)

[Converting Lawns to Meadows](#)

- PEC's new meadow brochure

Book recommendation: Zimmerman, C., 2010 *Urban & Suburban Meadows, Bringing Meadows to Big and Small Spaces*, Matrix Media Press. This book includes a chart comparing costs of maintaining a non-native lawn vs. native meadow over a 10-year period for a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> acre site.

## **Criminal Justice**

**We received good news this week. House Bill 587 that was introduced by Representative Steven Kinsey was voted in by the Judiciary Committee headed by Tim Briggs. It still must come out of Committee to the floor. It is our hope that the Bill will then be passed by the House and sent to the Senate. While this is a long battle, it is important for us to support the Bill through the entire process.**

**The Bill will offer prisoners a chance at Parole if they have substantially diminished ability to function in a corrections facility due to: terminal illness, chronic and debilitating physical or mental conditions, serious functional or cognitive impairment, deteriorating physical or mental health due to the aging process. These prisoners must be at least 55 years of age and have served the lesser of 25 years or half their minimum sentence. It must be determined that the individual is no threat to public safety.**

**I urge you to contact your Representative and the Representatives who passed the Bill in the Committee. Send them a brief message via email or phone and tell them that you support HR 587. This is your time to step up and make your voice heard.**

**Kay Sharp and Robin Garrett**

**Criminal Justice Committee members**