



Independent Learning MODULE

UNDERSTANDING 2022 MIDTERM ELECTIONS, and MORE in Pennsylvania



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This Module will provide information for eligible voters about:

1. How to understand the difference between;
 - **Closed Primary and**
 - **General Elections**
2. How to understand the difference between:
 - **Municipal(Local) and**
 - **STATE and FEDERAL Elections**

The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh is a nonprofit 501 (C)(3) organization and is nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties.

Why Voting is Important in a Democracy?

Why Vote in EVERY Election?

Our government affects many parts of our lives from schools and careers to health care to the environment

Voting is an important right in our society

By voting, you make your voice heard on how you think your government should operate

Roles & DUTIES of Our ELECTED OFFICIALS

Here is how to better understand the JOB of a "civil servant": those individuals YOU elect to REPRESENT "We the People"

See How Many of these Elected Officials are Running in the 2022 "Midterm" Primary

FEDERAL-US Congress SENATOR	FEDERAL-US Congress REPRESENTATIVE
6-YEAR TERM: Each state elects 2 US Senators. At least 35 years old. US Citizen at least 9 years. Must live in state at time of election. Responsibilities include: approve/disapprove bills, confirm/disconfirm appointments, and oversee executive branch.	2-YEAR TERM: Number of Representatives in proportion to population. Must 21 years old after 2022 Census, and have 14 years of citizenship. Responsibilities include: propose legislation, oversee executive branch, and represent constituents.
4-YEAR TERM: PA Governor. Must be 30 years old, US Citizen, and live in PA. Responsibilities include: propose/dispose legislation, appoint/disappoint judges, and oversee executive branch.	2-YEAR TERM: PA Lieutenant Governor. Must be 30 years old, US Citizen, and live in PA. Responsibilities include: propose/dispose legislation, appoint/disappoint judges, and oversee executive branch.
4-YEAR TERM: PA State Senator. Must be 21 years old, US Citizen, and live in PA. Responsibilities include: propose/dispose legislation, oversee executive branch, and represent constituents.	2-YEAR TERM: PA State Representative. Must be 21 years old, US Citizen, and live in PA. Responsibilities include: propose/dispose legislation, oversee executive branch, and represent constituents.
8-YEAR TERM: PA Supreme Court Judge. Must be 30 years old, US Citizen, and live in PA. Responsibilities include: hear and decide cases, and oversee judicial branch.	6-YEAR TERM: PA Judges. Must be 21 years old, US Citizen, and live in PA. Responsibilities include: hear and decide cases, and oversee judicial branch.

ROLES and DUTIES EXPLAINER

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YOU MATTER. YOUR VOTE MATTERS. YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

Voting makes your voice heard in one way that affects **real change**--by resulting in the policies and laws that *affect us all*.

The 2022 spring and fall elections are Federal* and State elections called the "MIDTERMS". They are called "midterms", because they occur 2 years into the administration of the President who was elected 2 years before. Registered voters have the chance to vote in these significant elections which will determine who serves in the **US Senate and House of Representatives (FEDERAL)**, in the **Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives (STATE)**, as well as the **PA Governor and Lt. Governor**.

See the "[Roles and Duties](#)" graphic here which explains who is running in 2022 and what their jobs are.

But first, let's figure out the difference between Pennsylvania's Closed Primaries and General Elections.

***Note:** "Federal" Elections may also be known as "National" Elections.

Two DIFFERENT Elections Each Year



PRIMARY -spring GENERAL Election -fall

- Other parties, besides the Republican and Democratic parties, like the Green and Libertarian, may have candidates on the General Election ballot
- There is no "Independent" party in PA
- **THIS Year...Redistricting and Reapportionment will have occurred to draw new CONGRESSIONAL and LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS, based on the 2020 Census.**



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EACH YEAR, there are *two DIFFERENT elections*:

- The **CLOSED PRIMARY in the spring** where only members of the two major parties-- Democratic and Republican-- may vote, choosing their candidates *for*
- the **GENERAL Election in the fall**, which can be either a Municipal or a Federal and State Election.

In GENERAL Elections:

- **ANY** eligible voter can vote for **ANY** candidate in **ANY** party.
- Straight party voting has been eliminated; eligible voters must go through the entire ballot choosing a candidate for each race.

THIS Year, Redistricting and Reapportionment, based on the 2020 Census. will have occurred to draw NEW CONGRESSIONAL and LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS,

- **See this "Redistricting and Reapportionment" explainer [here](#)** to understand how the changes to voting districts may affect you.

In PA's CLOSED Primaries



Do I Choose a Political Party or NOT?

Two **MAJOR** parties in the US:

- Democratic and Republican

Two smaller parties in PA:

- Green and Libertarian
- PA has no “Independent” party

IMPORTANT: By Pennsylvania state law, only voters registered in *one of the two major political parties may participate* in the **Closed Primaries**

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A **political party** is an organized group of people who have the same ideas, or who see things the same way and who find candidates for elections who will represent those ideas and positions in government.

When **registering to vote** a citizen may choose a party to belong to, but this is not required. You can change your party affiliation any time at www.vote.pa.gov.

- ✓ However, in **PA PRIMARIES**, only voters enrolled in the **Republican** or the **Democratic Parties**, may vote in the spring to elect their nominees for the fall General Election. In other words, Pennsylvania's Primaries are **CLOSED** to registered voters who are members of other *minor political bodies*, like the Green and Libertarian parties, or who don't belong to a party at all (are unaffiliated “independent” voters), and these voters *may not vote* in a Primary unless *there is a ballot question, constitutional amendment, or special election*.

In the spring Primary, because Democrats vote for Democrats and Republicans vote for Republicans, *ballots will be different* for Democrats and Republicans, (and for non-affiliated voters, who may vote if there are ballot questions, constitutional amendments, or if it is a special election.)

- ✓ Update your voter registration by adding or changing party affiliation [here](http://www.vote.pa.gov).

To Register to Vote:

- ✓ www.vote.pa.gov

Two Different TYPES of Elections (Every OTHER Year)



- **Municipal Elections**
Odd-numbered years
(Local, City, and County Officials,
Magistrates, Judges)
- **FEDERAL and STATE Elections**
Even-numbered years (2022)
(PA State Government,
US Congress and President)

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Every OTHER year, there are *different TYPES of elections*:

Municipal Elections (Odd-numbered years)–

- Might include *local, city, and county officials*, like mayors, city council members, district attorneys, sheriffs, school boards, magistrates, and judges

FEDERAL and STATE Elections (Even-numbered years) --

- *Congressional and Presidential* which include Senators and Representatives in Congress and Presidents and Vice Presidents
- *State* which includes State Senators and Representatives in PA government and other state officials, Governors and Lieutenant Governors

This year, in 2022, officials to be elected in Pennsylvania's Federal and State Midterms are:

- **Federal (Congressional) Elections: 1 US Senator; 17 US Representatives**
- **State (PA Legislature- "General Assembly"): 25 PA State Senators (half); 203 PA State Representatives (all)**
- **Executive: 1 Governor; 1 Lieutenant Governor**

Special Elections: Held when an elected official can no longer serve. May be held during General or Primary Elections, or on another designated day. Everyone living in that official's district can vote. *Be on the lookout for a Special Election in 2022.*

PRIMARIES

20% - 35%

Participate

YIKES!

What about the
"MIDTERM"
PRIMARY?



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Voter participation in Pennsylvania's CLOSED Primaries is HISTORICALLY LOW (as low as 20-35% of eligible voters). And yet, **about 80% of candidates** who will be on the General Election ballot will be chosen only by voters who belong to the two major political parties---Democrat and Republican. **Therefore, the real choices for voters occur in the spring Primary!**

Spread the Word! Voter turnout for BOTH the spring PRIMARY and fall GENERAL Election will have an impact on these significant elections. The officials who are elected in the Federal and State Midterms have great power to affect your lives; issues like voter access and election laws, school funding, infrastructure and environmental funding, government rules and regulations, and social and criminal justice laws, are all issues with great impact!

- **Are YOU and YOUR issues being represented when turnout is that LOW?**
What can you do?

Claim Your Power and VOTE!

- **In the fall General Election**, every eligible voter will see the *same ballot with all the candidates* who won in the spring Primary, *in addition to those from minor parties.*
- ✓ **Watch for deadlines** to register to vote, to update registration information, and to apply for and complete mail-in ballots at www.vote.pa.gov.
- ✓ **Update voter registration** by adding a name change, adding a new address if you have moved, or changing your party affiliation [here](#).
- ✓ **For in-person voting:** [Make a Plan to Vote](#). Learn more about in-person voting and approved ID with this graphic.
- ✓ **By the way, do you know your voting rights? Click [here](#) for more.**

Three Things to REMEMBER:

1. *Different Elections each year: Spring Primary and General Election in the Fall*

2. *Different Types of Elections: In 2022, significant FEDERAL and STATE MIDTERM Elections*

3. *Your VOTE is YOUR VOICE; PARTICIPATE and claim your POWER to make government work for YOU!*



BECOME A SUPER-VOTER AND VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION

“Democracy is NOT a spectator sport!”

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vote.pa.gov: [here](#)

- Where you can **register to vote**, change your name or address, your party affiliation, find your registration status, find your polling place, and more.

Vote411.org: [here](#)

- At this *League of Women Voters* website, a few weeks before every election, **type in your address and view the candidates who will be on your ballot**, and more. If candidates have answered three questions, you will be able to compare their answers side-by-side. You can also make a cheat sheet of your candidate choices by creating your **customized ballot** list, which will be emailed to you.

[League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh](https://lwvpgh.org): lwvpgh.org

- For the most current, nonpartisan election, voting, and government information.
- Find other [Modules](#) and other **unique graphics** in the [Voter Resource Library](#).

Still have questions? Please contact us at: civic.education@lwvpgh.org.

BECOME A SUPER-VOTER AND VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION
“Democracy is NOT a spectator sport!”