

VOLUME 28, No. 8 MAY 2022

There will be no program meeting in May. The LWVPGH Annual Meeting will be held, Wednesday, June 29, 2022 at 6 pm at Gaetano's, 1617 Banksville Rd, 15216. This will be a special event as it is the first in-person meeting the League has had since the start of the pandemic in early 2020. So, mark your calendars and plan to enjoy a buffet dinner, a special program, a bit of League "business," and most of all, being able to enjoy the friendship and company of one another! There will be more information and a registration form in the June issue of the VOTER.

On May 3, the League of Women Voters of the United States president **Dr. Deborah Turner** and CEO **Virginia Kase Solomón** issued the following joint statement in response to the leaked Supreme Court draft opinion that would overturn *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*:

"Reproductive care is essential health care and a fundamental right that the Supreme Court is preparing to undermine. If this draft opinion holds, and overturns *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, it not only strips women and pregnant people of their personal autonomy but opens the door to erode more fundamental rights. As an organization that believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy, we will fight to preserve the individual rights of women to make their own reproductive choices.

"The leaked Supreme Court opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* is an affront to our values that support access to health care, reproductive rights, and individual liberties and privacy. If this draft opinion is finalized as leaked, it will be an unprecedented blow to women and will put the reproductive health of millions in danger. This opinion is also a direct attack on Black women and all underserved communities who already experience unfair barriers and limited access to adequate health care services.

"All people deserve access to quality health care, including abortion, and the privacy to make reproductive choices. Today *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* are still the law, and we will stand with our allies to protect women's access to care. It is critical that we show up in solidarity, and make our voices heard for reproductive choice. Our democracy depends on it."

The League of Women Voters of the United States filed an amicus brief in <u>Dobbs v. Jackson</u> Women's Health Organization, and we await the official published opinion from the Court.

[Editor's note] LWVUS responses to some previous cases dealing with reproductive rights can be found here below the above statement.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Primary Day is Fast Approaching



What are you doing on Tuesday, May 17th? Are you going to the polls to cast your vote in person or are you one of the 109,000 Allegheny County residents who have applied for a mail-in ballot? Or are you one of the 1 million-plus

PA voters who aren't eligible to vote in PA's closed primary system?

If you're eligible to vote, please make sure to do so. Before you cast your ballot, take a look at Vote411 to find out who your candidates are and where they stand on the issues. Some of us will find out that our Congressional or state legislative districts have changed and that incumbents we had grown used to seeing are no longer on the ballot. For example, the two Congressional Districts in Allegheny County, the 12th and 17th, have been newly redrawn to comply with census numbers, and the current Congressional representatives, Mike Doyle and Conor Lamb are not on the ballot. So, take a close look at the Republicans and Democrats who are running to fill those positions.

There are also opportunities to watch the candidates in action. LWVPGH and Robert Morris University recently conducted two forums for candidates in the 17th District. Point Park University students with support from LWVPGH did a forum for the Democratic candidates for the 12th Congressional District. Those forums can be viewed by going to our website to click on the videos. In addition, WTAE and LWVPGH will also be hosting a forum for the

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The League is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to encourage the informed participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

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Democratic candidates for the 12th Congressional District. That forum will be broadcast live on WTAE on Tuesday, May 10th at 7 PM with Shannon Perrine moderating.

Each of us may also find that we are no longer in the same State House or State Senate district as previously. The redrawing of those State Legislative Districts has meant that some incumbents have chosen not to run again or to run for different offices. Some of those newly redrawn districts may mean more competitive races both in the Primary and in November, so your vote may count even more than previously. Make sure you remind your family, friends and neighbors to check on what their ballot will look like.

And, if you're one of those voters who are ineligible to cast a primary ballot, take heart. Pennsylvania is one of only 9 states in the country that has a closed primary system, but that may be changing. Independent and non-affiliated voters are the fastest growing segment of voters in PA and there is some strong movement building to modify our current closed primary system. Bills have been introduced in the Legislature and a grass-roots coalition, Ballot PA, is actively lobbying to allow non-affiliated voters some ability to vote in primaries. The League of Women Voters of PA and Common Cause are also part of that grass-roots coalition. Many elections, particularly state legislative seats, may be decided in the primary, and not allowing non-affiliated voters to participate in those races effectively means they have no say at all. In addition, there have been some studies that have found that these types of races have meant that candidates have become more partisan over time, leading to dysfunction in our legislative processes. Spotlight PA recently ran an interesting article about this situation. You can find it here.

Allegheny County continues to need poll workers for Primary Day. I've signed up to work the polls. If you or anyone you know can do that, please sign up now by going to the County website. Lots of college students will be coming home and they might be interested in earning a few dollars while participating in our important democratic processes.

Maureen Grosheider

LEAGUE MEETING STRUCTURE

Board Meetings

✓ **Second** Monday of the month.. Meeting: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., currently by Zoom.

Local Area Unit Meetings

- ✓ Pittsburgh Central: Currently not meeting. Contact Martha Raak at 412-477-7572 or marbiker1@gmail.com
- ✓ North Hills: Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Mott at 412-779-3089 or namott001@gmail.com
- ✓ South Hills: Currently not meeting. Contact Maureen Mamula at 412-760-9642 or mamula159@hotmail.com

Other Ongoing Meetings

- ✓ Education Committee
 1st Wednesday by Zoom.
 Chair is Kathy Nagle,
 education@lwvpgh.org or
 1-814-241-8149
- ✓ Voter Service Committee

 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 12:30 pm.
 by Zoom. Additional meetings
 occasionally added as needed.
 Chair is Judy Clack at
 512-731-0280
 voterservice@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ Advocacy Committee
 3rd Monday by Zoom.
 Chair Michele Knoll
 412-389-1387
 advocacy@lwvpqh.org
- ✓ Gun Safety Committee
 Currently not meeting.
 Contact Nancy Naragon at
 412-366-2446 or
 development@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ Non-fiction Book Club

 3rd Friday, 10:15 am. Meeting place determined each month, see calendar. Contact Joan Cucinotta, 412-708-2335 or ioancucinotta@gmail.com

This column will be updated as in-person meetings become possible or changes in League programming are made.

May-June Calendar				
May				
3 Tue	Voter Service Committee meeting, 12:30-2:30 pm on Zoom			
4 Wed	Education Committee meeting, 7:00 pm on Zoom			
9 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm, on Zoom			
9 Mon	Meet the Candidates: Part 2, 6-8:30, Statewide and Legislative candidates invited, St. James AME Church, 444 Lincoln Ave., Pittsburgh, 15206			
10 Tue	12th Congressional District Debate, live on WTAE-TV. All five Democratic candidates for US Congressional District 12.			
16 Mon	Advocacy Committee meeting, 11 am on Zoom			
17 Tue	Primary Election			
17 Tue	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch here. Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.			
20 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting			
June				
7 Tue	Voter Service Committee meeting, 12:30-2:30 pm on Zoom			
8 Wed	Education Committee meeting, 7:00 pm on Zoom			
13 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm, on Zoom			
17 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting			
20 Mon	Advocacy Committee meeting, 11 am on Zoom			
Tue 21	LWVPA Government Policy Update, 7:00-8:00 pm. Register to watch here . Updates are held the third Tuesday of each month.			
June 23 - 26	LWVUS National Convention			
29 Wed	LWVPGH Annual Meeting			

It's Primary Time on the Website by Ruth Quint

Election seasons are a busy time on the LWVPGH website, with voters searching online for last-minute information on their candidates, ballots and voting options. The web team continues to work to make our site the "one stop shopping" destination for information tailored to Allegheny County voters. Here are some of the resources available for Primary 2022.

The homepage at www.lwvpgh.org features Vote411 and the Voters Guide. Visitors to the website can enter their home address in a "widget" on the homepage to be taken directly to their Vote411 ballot information, or download a full copy of the Voters Guide that was published in the New Pittsburgh Courier.

Essential information to help voters participate in the Primary is available on the updated edition the "Get Ready to Vote" flyer (A.K.A, the "rack card.) Thanks to Eileen Olmsted, this important flyer is also available in Spanish.

The homepage also has snapshots of how Allegheny County is broken down in the three new district maps, US Congress, and PA House and Senate maps.

This year the MAY PRIMARY 2022 menu has four pages:

Primary 101 has information about this year's dates and deadlines, an explanation of Pennsylvania's closed primary system, images of sample ballots and links to several updated infographics or "explainers' for the primary election. www.lwvpgh.org/primary

Candidate Forums has information on upcoming candidate forums, as well as embedded videos of any recorded forums that have been sponsored or cosponsored by LWVPGH or LWVPA. There are multiple forums for Allegheny County's competitive US Congressional races, and a recorded forum from LWVPA which includes the statewide races for Governor, Lt. Governor, and US Senate. While these forums are already available on various YouTube, Facebook, or media websites, the Candidate Forums page allows Allegheny County voters to

find them all in one place. www.lwvpgh.org/forums

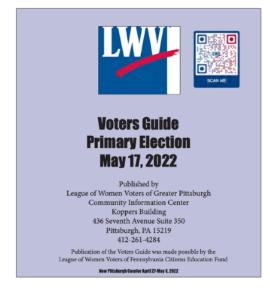
EXTRA!
EXTRA!
Vote411
Mini-Guides!

The new PA House & Senate page aims to help voters make sense of their new districts and find their own candidates for the May primary. Each PA House or Senate district has a panel with a zoomed-in map of each district, a list of municipalities and neighborhoods in the district, and the candidates (if any) running for the Republican and Democratic nominations in the district. A team of volunteers used Vote411 data to create Voter "Mini-Guides" for each district. www.lwvpgh.org/PAcandidates

The En Español page features the Spanish language "rack card" for the primary, a link to the Spanish-language version of Vote411, and flyers explaining how to register to vote and how to vote in person. www.lwvpgh.org/espanol

In addition, the pages on our Voting menu are updated with current deadlines, Elections Division office hours, and the most current information on mail-in ballots, drop box hours, voter eligibility, and more. This year a new Know Your Rights page has been added to the existing Make a Plan to Vote and Mail-in Voting pages.

All of this content on the website is produced by busy teams of volunteers. If you would like to get involved, please take a look at the Member Hub page to find a committee or event to jump into. New committee members and new ideas are always welcome! www.lwvpgh.org/members. And, most importantly, please use and spread the word about the Election Resources available at www.lwvpgh.org.



VOTER SERVICE REPORT by Judy Clack, Voter Service Chair



This month I'd like to do the voter service report by posting a series of photos. We were finally able to volunteer in person and there was a lot of activity in April. Here's our photo record.

2022 Primary Voter Education Materials: English Rack Card, Spanish Rack Card, Sr. Citizen Door Hanger

20,000 copies of a card outlining primary election information were distributed to 150 Allegheny County food pantries, county libraries, nonpartisan nonprofit organizations, schools and colleges. A larger-font PDF version was emailed to over 250 senior subsidized housing managers and faith-based organizations. The content was translated into Spanish and distributed to nonprofits serving that community. Then, an even larger font version with key information was printed on door hangers for distribution to some senior housing buildings. Thanks to chairpersons Kathy Herbst (Food Pantries), Nancy Mott and Linda Schneider (Sr. Subsidized Housing), Eileen Olmsted (Spanish), and Ruth Quint (Design).

Candidate Forum at Point Park University

A class at Point Park University approached the LWVPGH about collaborating on a candidate forum for the 12th Congressional District. For the first time ever, the LWVPGH turned all the tasks over to a group of students. They rose to the occasion and held a very successful event! Here are all the students involved from the class and from Point Park News Service with their professor, Dr. Andrew Conte. They were mentored throughout the planning and execution by Judy Clack, Maureen Grosheider, and Annette Shimer.







Your Vote is Your Voice!

All five Democratic candidates for the 12th Congressional District participated in the April 12 forum (photo left), although three of them had to appear virtually: Steve Irwin, Summer Lee, and Jerry Dickinson. Candidates Will Parker and Jeff Woodard attended in person. The Republican candidate, Mike Doyle, did not respond to the invitation.

Point Park University students, Alexis Bonifate and Colton Debiase (photo right), moderated the 12th Congressional District forum at Point Park's Center for Media Innovation. They chose the questions from those submitted and edited them to ensure they were unbiased and non-leading. The forum was held with a live audience, broadcast live, and recorded for later viewing.





Voter Registration Events

Happy to be back in person, Lora Medwid, Mary Beth Guzzetta (Chair), Judy Clack, and Ellie Siegal participated in a PittVotes registration event at the University of Pittsburgh on April 14 (photo left).

Photo to the right, (L to R) Judy Schryer, Carol Emerson, Judy Clack, and Barb Grover were joined by Bernadette (Bernie) Krueger (Chair), Rachael Heisler, Kathy Herbst and Nancy Mott at a voter registration event at Duquesne University on April 7.

Meet and Greet the Candidates

Candidates for statewide and local state legislative offices (back row) and volunteers from B-PEP, LWVPGH, John Lewis Coalition for Transformative Justice, and Pittsburgh Higher Ground Ministry gathered at the Letter Carriers Hall on April 19 for a "Meet and Greet the Candidates." (photo below)





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LWVPGH timers, Rosemary Prostko (raising paddle) and Cris Beuger (watching stopwatch) kept candidates from going over their allotted time at the April 19 statewide and local Meet and Greet the Candidates. (photo right)

Distributing the LWVPGH 's Facts for Citizens and the Primary 2022 Voter Education Card to all in attendance at the April 19 Candidate Meet and Greet were (L to R) Judy Mancini, Genevieve Rosselot, and Peggy Schmiedecke. (photo below)





More Info Distribution

Genevieve Rosselot, at a neighborhood sidewalk sale, provided voter registration, mail-in ballot applications, LWVPGH membership information, and Facts for Citizens (online and printed), and encouraged neighbors to become poll workers. (photo right)



17th District Candidate Forums



Kristen Davis, Robert Morris University Honors Senior, moderated a LWVPGH Democratic Primary Forum for the 17th Congressional District on April 20. Chris Deluzio and Sean Meloy participated.



Kristen Davis, Robert Morris University Honors Senior, moderated a LWVPGH Republican Primary Forum for the 17th Congressional District on April 20. Kathy Coder and Jason Killmeyer participated; Jeremy Shaffer was unavailable.

See both forums at https://lwvpgh.org/forums; scroll down to 17th district. Judy Clack, Emily Ferri, Maureen Grosheider, and Annette Shimer helped plan and execute both events.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY by Amy Kleissas

Macedonia FACE presentation on March 15th: Through terrific coordination of the Senior Housing team chair, Linda Schneider, Michelle Grant and Amy Kleissas had a great time presenting "Informed Active Citizens—For Adults" to Macedonia FACE members at the Thelma Lovette YMCA in the Hill. The enthusiastic participants kept us for a total time of 1½ hours spent with them. They had many pertinent questions including questions about Pennsylvania's Closed Primaries and redistricting. We will continue sending current information to the staff. They have displayed the "Claim Your Power" voter registration poster with QR code and at least 6 scans have been recorded.

Ready-Set-Vote Bags for 2022 Primary for Schools and Community: Following the 2020 election, when we learned that 40% of Allegheny County citizens were without reliable internet, we began creating these printed, grant-funded, nonpartisan resources. The Cover Sheet for the bags has a unique, trackable QR Code to vote411.org.



Civic Education team presenter Michelle Grant and a Macedonia FACE member

We met on April 6 and 7th to assemble **3000 Ready-Set-Vote bags** at home of Amy Kleissas. Thanks to Judy Clack and Kathy Herbst for supplying "**3000 "Ready to Vote Rack Cards**" with deadlines and websites. **Many thanks to the terrific volunteers in the photos below!**



Packing Bee Volunteers 4.6.22 – Joell Spindler, Doug Spindler, Joanne Moore, Michelle Grant, Susan Fair, Ruth Quint. Michele Knoll



Packing Bee Volunteers 4.7.22 – Clare Porac, Lora Medwid, Mary Guzzetta, Peggy Schmiedecke, Marilyn Jenkins, Lisa Kessel.

We assembled 2000 bags the first day and 1000 bags the second. Materials for an additional 1000 bags were purchased for Westmoreland high schools and community groups. Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers for assembling and delivering the Ready-Set-Voter bags:

- Pittsburgh Public Schools: 1250 bags; delivered by Joanne Moore
- Westmoreland County High Schools: 1000 (unassembled); delivered by Marilyn Jenkins
- B-PEP: 300 + 200 Businesses; delivered by Peggy Schmiedecke
- **VEEEM:** 500; delivered by Amy Kleissas
- **JCC:** 500 + 200 Businesses; delivered by Michele Knoll
- AKA: 150; delivered by Amy Kleissas

TOTAL: 4100 Ready-Set-Vote Bags. Community members who have received these materials are coordinating their distribution ahead of the 2022 Primary, including a new 2022 effort to distribute bags to home businesses or to businesses in the community.



Coordinators 4.6.22 – Amy Kleissas and Joanne Moore

BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

The Book Club reading for May: There Is Nothing for You Here: Finding Opportunity in the Twenty-First Century by Fiona Hill.

BOOK REVIEW

The April book selection, *The Ministry For the Future* by Kim Stanley Robinson, is as big and as dense as the topic it addresses: how to solve the current inevitability of massive human destruction caused by climate change. Robinson, who has been called "one of the best living science-fiction writers," is a prolific writer with a long list of awards.

This book interlaces a compendium of climate change facts with a fictional narrative to portray the inevitable suffering and destruction everyone will soon face.

The compendium aspect of the book covers a stunning range of information (financial indices, the measurements for wealth disparity, the human tendency towards cognitive errors, histories of financial endeavors, the origin of the dollar as the de facto global currency, the beginning of the IMF, and so much more). Admittedly, some of these entries are almost mind-numbing with details from science to economics. But one of the most innovative and imaginative ideas the book explores has to do with replacing the world's currencies with "carbon coins." Each coin would represent a certain amount of carbon that is not used. The twist is that these carbon coins would be issued with blockchain, the method used with cryptocurrencies that makes all financial transactions transparent thereby preventing criminal misuse, wealth sequestering, and insider trading.

The narrative side of the book includes allegories, legends, bedtime stories, and even a personal history as told by a carbon atom. The central narrative traces the problems and tactics used by Mary Murphy, who heads the Ministry of the Future, as she comes to understand the scope of the problem and acquires the nerves it takes to address it. Part of her learning comes from meeting Frank, an aid worker who had been caught in the searing and defining opening scene. In a small town in India, the soaring heat index causes tens of thousands to die—either baked alive in the streets where they finally collapsed or cooked in the lake where they mistakenly hoped the water might be cooling. Frank's first-hand experience with this event, its aftermath, his personal attempts to fight back against the powers that had bought about the catastrophe, and his sorrowful attempts to create a life of any kind is the kind of reality check he can share with Mary who is working with groups far removed and protected from the lived experience of most of the world.

The book covers a long fifteen years, and change is brought about using both carrot and stick. The stick in this narrative takes the form of revenge events following the catastrophe in the Indian town. From highly organized ad hoc groups to solitary assassins, retribution is taken violently against wealthy individuals and corporations that have acted with impunity in the face of their complicity in the problem.

The carrot, on the other hand, is the development of carbon coins. When Mary finally convinces world bankers to sign on to this idea, she shows them that this method would still guarantee wealth production, but just in a more modest and predictable way. She tells them they must invent "post-capitalism." The Ministry offers the Modern Monetary Theory as a roadmap which holds that "the economy works for humans, not humans for the economy." The book ends, after much destruction and loss of life, with structures in place to prevent further problems and to bring some return to a better life. It is a very dark book but with a hopeful ending.

BOOK DISCUSSION

The group found this a highly engaging and important book on climate change. That its cover touts it as "one of Barack Obama's favorite books of the year" speaks to the impact such a book can make on politicians. Especially appealing to the group was the interlacing of the narrative with the factual elements. Such an approach would be helpful for nonbelievers in that the drama of the narrative can make the hard facts more palatable.

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The group admitted to a certain skepticism about the easy success of some of the suggested solutions. For example, returning tracts of land to a natural habitat would certainly improve climate conditions, but the book does not address where and how to move all the people currently living on these lands.

The group was especially grateful that "Cryptocurrencies" had been our topic last month (with the excellent introduction delivered by League member Ron Bandes). It went a long way toward appreciating Robinson's promotion of Carbon Coins and the value that blockchain brings to that use.

The group considered the enormous challenge of social change in any area. Changes on the scale suggested by Robinson seem gargantuan and almost beyond comprehension. Even something we now practice easily, recycling, was a hard sell at the beginning. Social change takes almost a generation to take hold. But the point is, these things did change eventually and Robinson's ideas can also come to fruition.

The Ministry for the Future's warning on the calamity that awaits us is easily ignored these days. But one member advised us not to lose hope. Citing Saving Us by Hope Hayhoe, she noted that only 11% of the population actually rejects the notion of climate change which means that the task of moving the general population may not be as daunting as it first appears. It does mean a return to more community-minded principles, an idea we came across in our recent reading of The Upswing by Robert Putnam.

LWVGP Officers / E	xecutive Committee	Local Area Meeting Chairs		
President	Maureen Grosheider	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak	
V.P.1 Development, Gun	Nancy Naragon	North Hills 412-779-3089	Nancy Mott	
V.P.2 Program	Cris Beuger	South Hills 412-760-9642	Maureen Mamula	
Secretary	Mary Molloy			
Treasurer	Preston Shimer			
<u>Directors</u>		Interest & Service Area Specialists		
Voter Service	Judy Clack	VOTER Editor	Sue Broughton	
Membership, Naturalization	Judy Diorio	Book Club	Joan Cucinotta	
Social media	Emily Ferri	Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon	
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Terrie Griffin	Senior Housing	Nancy Mott	
Publicity & Public Relations	Lydia Hatcher	Environment	Don Naragon	
Civic Education	Amy Kleissas	PR, Communications, Blast	Eileen Olmsted	
Advocacy	Michelle Knoll	Senior Housing	Linda Schneider	
Education, Leg. Interviews	Kathy Nagle	Housing	Adelaide Smith	
Webmaster	Ruth Quint	National / State Program	Carol Walton	
Vote411 & Voter Guides	Annette Shimer			
Staff				
Community Information	Manager: Barbara Simpson	Marcellus Shale Grant	Manager: Heather Harr	
	League Phone Numbers, \	Websites, and Social Media		
Greater Pittsburgh	412-261-4284	lwvpgh.org		
Pennsylvania	717-234-1576 Ext 0	palwv.org		
National	202-429-1965	lwv.org		
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