

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA CAPITAL REGION

Newsletter

Heads up! The primary election is not far away!

April 23, 2024, is the date of the Pennsylvania primary election. The last day to register is April 8. Your election team is trying a new approach for school students, inspired by the presentation by Kevin Wagner from the Carlisle School district. High schools will be offered an in-person event, "Happy birthday" packets for students turning 18, or voter registration forms.

Is this something you would like to help with? Contact Iris at iozzia@comcast.net or Deb at Deben-dres6@gmail.com.

News from the Programs Team: We have two interesting programs coming up!

Thursday March 7 at 6.30 p.m.: Our speaker will be **Veronica Degraffenreid**, former Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of PA, who is now working at the Brennan Center for Justice. Her career experience includes working as a special advisor for election modernization with the Pennsylvania Department of State. Ms. Degraffenreid also served on the North Carolina State Board of Elections for over a decade. The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law is a liberal or progressive nonprofit law and public policy institute.

Thursday April 4 at 6:30 p.m.: Our speaker will be **Dorene Wilbur**, who is the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging specialist at the PA Office of the Attorney General. We will be hearing about what the PA Attorney General's office has implemented on DEIB and their expectations for various non-profit, non-partisan groups like LWV in our DEI implementations. Ms. Wilbur has a master's in education and has worked in the DEIB area for several years. She is a former teacher at Carlisle Area School District and has been involved with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission where she has been a staunch advocate for children. She was the recipient of the Jim Washington Station of Hope Award on Feb. 25th, 2023. Recently she was the keynote speaker for the Carlisle Area 35th Annual Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration where she represented the Office of the PA Attorney General.

You will receive the **Zoom links** in a separate email closer to the date. Thank you so very much for your interest in DEIB and your support. *Lillian G.*

The Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Team News

In February we celebrated **Black History Month**. February includes the birthday of Abraham Lincoln on February 12 and Frederick Douglass on February 14. Douglass was a slave who escaped slavery in Maryland and became the face of the abolitionist movement. February 1 is National Freedom Day, when President Lincoln signed the 13th Amendment which abolished slavery. February 4 is Rosa Parks Day.



Other important days in February were the Lunar New Year which occurred on February 10. It signifies the first new moon of the year. It is also the Chinese New Year (Year of the Dragon).

February 15 was the Buddhist Nirvana Day and February 20 was the World Day of Social Justice.

To honor Black History Month, there are several books related to black history that are currently popular and highly recommended. Most have been banned by anti-DEI groups. Caste and The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson: Caste explains the origin of racism and why racism still exists in various countries. The Warmth of Other Suns tells the story of the great migration of black people from the South to the Northern and Western parts of the United States after the Reconstruction period was ended. The Pulitzer Prize-winning book The 1619 Project written by Nikole Hannah-Jones is also highly recommended. The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot deals with ethical issues of race and class in medical research. It describes the immortal cell line, known as HeLa, that came from Lacks's cervical cancer cells in 1951 with no consent from her or her family.

Movie recommendations are Emancipation, a 2022 movie starring Will Smith. It tells the story of a slave who escapes from Louisiana to make a dangerous journey north. It is based on a true freedom story of Gordon/Whipped Peter who escaped and became a Union soldier in the Civil War.

Thirteen Lives is a movie about the rescue of a group of young boys and their soccer coach who are trapped in an underground cave in Thailand. The boys and the coach were trapped for 18 days in the underground cave and the rescue took 6 hours to extract all of them. There was a complication because 3 of the boys were stateless and came from Laos, China, and Myanmar.

If interested in joining this team, please contact Patty L. at President@lwvpacapreg.org or Lillian at Lilliangrieco@verizon.net.

We appreciate the research done by our DEI team. Enjoy reading and watching!

The bilingual English/Spanish children’s book, “Voting is Your Superpower,” authored by our own award-winning Mary Ellen B., is based on the true story of taking her daughter to the polls, even the part where the character’s dog peeks out from the voting booth. To purchase a copy, email

President@lwvpacapreg.org. The price is \$15.00.



Update on the Patricia L. Murray Fund grant Guide to Voting

We have now completed the translation of our Guide to Voting in six languages--Arabic, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. They will be distributed to several YMCAs in our area, and potentially several libraries. These distribution sites will enable us to reach a larger demographic base such as teenagers who may be eligible to register to vote, young parents, and persons with English as a second language. We are also working with libraries to set up displays and materials prior to the primary election in April.



Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and tell all your friends! Anything you think we should feature on our page? Contact Krysta at PavascoK@gmail.com. Find our Facebook and Instagram sites through our website at www.lwvpacapreg.org.

Legislative News

Thank you to member Joe M who keeps us abreast of what is happening in our state legislature. Joe provided an overview on the nature, and implications, of the lawsuit recently filed in federal district court for the middle district of Pennsylvania, titled “Rep. Dawn Keefer et al vs. President Joseph Biden and Governor Josh Shapiro et al.” The purpose of this suit is to restrain the executives’ ability to ease the voting registration process. The Plaintiffs bringing the lawsuit are Pennsylvania legislators, mostly allied with the conservative Freedom Caucus.

Here is a link to a relevant news article. A copy of the federal pleading is provided with the article. <https://penncapital-star.com/voting/pennsylvania-gop-lawmakers-file-suit-against-biden-and-shapiro-over-election-authority/>

Team Updates and Opportunities

Communications Team Check out our **Instagram** and **Facebook** accounts. They can be accessed through our website at www.lwvpacapreg.org. Krysta P. is the lead person (PavascoK@gmail.com).

Events & Programs Team The Program committee holds regular, monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. We will discuss areas of interest that we should focus on this year and welcome any and all ideas. Right now, we are thinking through presentations on: the role of school directors, sustainability, storm water management, observation corps, and BallotPA report. If you have other ideas or recommendations, please contact President@lwvpacapreg.org.

Membership Team This team aims to grow membership and engagement. Our League currently has more than 80 members. If interested in joining this team, please contact Rae N. at Raeneubaum@aol.com.

Nominations Team This team seeks nominees for the Steering Committee. If interested in joining this team, please contact Deb E. at Debendres6@gmail.com.

Voter Services & Registration Team This team coordinates and staffs voter registration drives in various local settings. If interested in joining this team, please contact Deb E. at Debendres6@gmail.com or Iris I. at iozzia@comcast.net.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Team If interested in joining this team, please contact Patty L. at President@lwvpacapreg.org.

State League news

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is pleased to formally announce the hire of Dr. Amy Widestrom as our new Executive Director. Amy will start on January 1, 2024. Maria Delgado-Santana, the President of League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, is looking forward to working with Amy, stating “Dr. Widestrom’s wealth of experience and passion for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging will enable LWVPA to expand its reach, increase membership, and engage new and young voters. Our shared vision is to support local League chapters across Pennsylvania in their efforts to increase voter education and participation among voters of all ages, racial and ethnic groups, and belief systems. I am very excited for the League and I am looking forward to working with Dr. Widestrom!”

In League,
Sherry R, President, LWVAPREG,
President@lwvpacapreg.org
Visit our website at www.lwvpacapreg.org.
Joanne B. and Janette M., Newsletter Editors

If interested in joining a team, please email President@lwvpacapreg.org