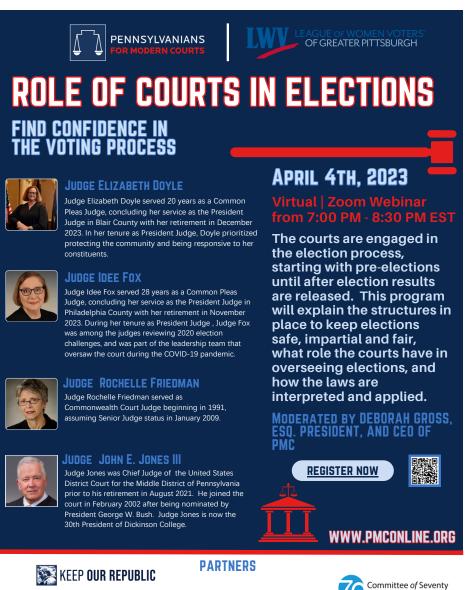


VOLUME 30, NO. 6

MARCH 2024

APRIL PROGRAM

This program will explain the structures in place to keep elections safe, impartial, and fair, what role the courts have in overseeing elections, and how the laws are interpreted and applied. The public is invited. You can <u>register here</u>. Organized by Barbara Grabowski. Speakers recruited by PMC.



PRESIDENT'S **M**ESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh is pleased to welcome Dr. Amy Widestrom, Ph.D., to the position of Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Widestrom graduated from Oberlin College and received her Ph.D. in Political Science from Syracuse University. She was a Congressional Fellow of the American Political Association in 2008-2009, worked for the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs on economic recovery efforts following the 2008 financial crisis.

While at California State University, Long Beach between 2009-2012, and at Arcadia University in Pennsylvania, from 2012-2023 she conducted research, published, and taught American politics, policies, and institutions.



At Arcadia University Dr. Widestrom

served for more than

five years as chair of the Department of Historical & Political Studies.

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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.

VOTER Editor: Sue Broughton

Email: info@lwvpgh.org To unsubscribe from the VOTER, email with subject "Unsubscribe"

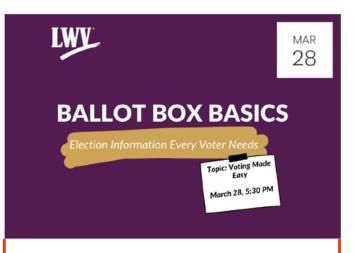
Hard copy subscriptions are available for \$20 per year.

She has served as Judge of Elections in Cheltenham Township, November 2021 until January 2024, when she was selected to become the Pennsylvania League's executive director.

Dr. Widestrom will be visiting Western Pennsylvania this Spring to meet with leadership in our League. We welcome her experience and acumen in politics and government to help us enable voters and defend Democracy.

Best Regards,

Michele Knoll



The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is pleased to present **Ballot Box Basics: Information Every Voter Needs**, a free webinar series open to the public. These monthly webinars will discuss important topics like registering to vote, voting integrity, your polling place, voter ID requirements, election security, constitutional amendments, and Pennsylvania government.

Join LWVPA and the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh for our March event, which gives voters the basics of voting, including registration, polling places, voting by mail, candidate information, and more! Amy Kleissas, Civic Engagement Director with the Greater Pittsburgh League, will present. This presentation, entitled "Train the Trainer" will provide the information that attendees can use to train students, new voters, and fellow League members to conduct voter registration drives.

REGISTER HERE TO ATTEND.

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 Currently not meeting. education@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ Voter Service Committee 1st 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 Currently not meeting. Chair Michele Knoll 412-389-1387 advocacy@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ Gun Safety Committee Currently not meeting. Contact Nancy Naragon at 412-366-2446 or development@lwvpgh.org
- ✓ Web Team 4th Monday of the month at noon. Contact; Ruth Quint, 412-630-8677 or webmaster@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 joancucinotta@gmail.com

This column will be updated as changes g are made.

March-April Calendar				
March				
15 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2:00			
19 Tue	LWV Bucks County program on Eliminating the Electoral College. 7-8:5 by Zoom			
25 Mon	Web Team Meeting, 12:00 pm-1:00 pm by Zoom			
28 Thu	Ballot Box Basics, 5:30 pm, by Zoom			
April				
1 Mon	Board meeting, 12:30 pm (note change of date)			
2 Tue	Voter Service Meeting, 12:30 pm, by Zoom			
4 Thu	April program: Role of Courts in Elections, 7:00-8:30, by Zoom			
8 Mon	Last Day to REGISTER to VOTE before Primary			
16 Tue	Last Day to Request a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot			
19 Fri	Non-fiction Book Club meeting, 10:30-2:00			
22 Mon	Web Team Meeting, 12:00 pm-1:00 pm by Zoom			
23 Tue	PRIMARY ELECTION DAY			

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM INTERESTED MEMBERS OF AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE ON OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS OR APPLY FOR ANY OF OUR OPEN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS. BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN THE LEAGUE! PLEASE CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

NANCY MOTT <u>namott001@gmail.com</u> OR JUDY CLACK <u>voterservice@lwvpgh.org</u>

CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

by Joanne Moore, High School Outreach Coordinator

The civic education in schools season is in full swing! February and March have kept the Civic Ed Team hopping across Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties. After a big kick-off day with our friends at Chartiers Valley High School, the team spent two days at Avonworth, one at Sto-Rox and one at Derry Area High School. Two visits to Carrick High School and one to Taylor Allderdice continued the relationship with Pittsburgh Public Schools. A total of 24 presentations were given in February with an estimated 100+ registrations and

counting! March has us at Southmoreland High School, Valley High School, Plum and Urban Pathways. An additional visit to Allderdice will round out the month.

Excitingly, the Civic Education Team has forged two new school relationships- Sto-Rox and Mt. Lebanon. While Mt. Lebanon was not able to schedule us for a visit, we did provide significant guidance for their week long, Student Council driven voter registration program scheduled for mid-March. Resources from the LWVPGH website, especially the Civic Education Resources page, were shared with the Student Council Moderator and the Head of the Social Studies department. Our presentation, WHY VOTE, was particularly useful as this was the theme the Council chose for the drive. Hopefully next year we will be in for an in-person visit!



Presenter Joanne Moore at Chartiers Valley High School

Our Valentine's Day visit to Sto-Rox was the opening of another new relationship. Sto-Rox was pleased to take our Ready Set Vote Bags in the Fall and the Principal, Guidance Counselor and Social Studies Teacher all responded to our offering of a classroom presentation. They are eager for their students to hear the message! Sto-Rox has an 80% minority enrollment, and 94.6% of the students are economically disadvantaged. Our experience was enlightening and the Team made programmatic adjustments in-situ to insure a successful day for the students. Our host teacher was thrilled we came and inquired at the end of the day if we would be willing to come back! Of course we will!!

MORE CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY by Amy Kleissas



Twenty amazing volunteers made two packing bees of **Ready-Set-Vote! bags** on **March 6th and 7th** a real success. **2500 bags** were assembled and distributed to multiple community organizations: B-PEP (Black-Political Empowerment Project), AKA (Alpha Kappa Alpha), VEEEM (Voter

Empowerment, Education & Enrichment Movement), National Council of Negro Women (Rankin/Mon Valley/ Pittsburgh section), Carnegie Library ("Ask a League Member" presentation), West End P.O.W.E.R (reentering citizens halfway houses), Sewickley Library, PPS Student Voice conference.



March 6 photo: A. Kleissas, S. Duncan, E. Siegal, C. Vermillion, N. Heastings, R. Quint, J. Latour-Nichols. Not pictured, M. Grant and L. Medwid.

Continued next page

LWVPGH Voter · March 2024 · Page 5



March 7 photo: P. Schmiedecke, M. Jenkins, J. Brado, Joyce Moore, J. Clack, A. Kleissas, L. Presser, K. Kluesner, J. Jenkins, S. Fair, Joanne Moore, K. Herbst

Not only did our volunteers make this Ready-Set-Vote! packing bee a success, but it was also a terrific way to kick off this consequential election year! In 2024, for the two Federal and State elections, we will provide *unique voter information* for the seventh and eighth time!

Bags included voter registration forms with the application for a mail-in ballot, three double-sided graphics—Vote the Whole Ballot, Roles and Duties of Officials, How to Pick a Candidate, Make-a-Plan to Vote, Mail-in Ballot flyer, and What Sources Can You Trust—in addition to the 2024 "Your Government Officials" brochure, the LWVPGH Website Resource postcard, and a business card from VoteRiders.



VOTER SERVICE REPORT by Judy Clack, Vice President Voter Service

Three Candidate Eat, Meet, and Greets LWVPGH has been co-sponsoring Candidate "Eat, Meet and Greets" prior to each election with B-PEP (Black Political Empowerment Project) and a few other mostly African American nonpartisan organizations. This year, our group has greatly expanded to over 30 diverse, nonpartisan groups. Our name is the *Voting is Power (VIP) Pittsburgh Regional Coalition*.

All Allegheny County candidates will be invited to all three events. Each will get to speak for 5 minutes each. But no questions may be posed since an opponent may not be present. All events will run from 6:00 – 8:30 pm with volunteers arriving at 5:15 pm. Email Judy Clack if you'd like to volunteer and for which date: voterservice@lwvpgh.org.

Full details will be emailed to you.

- 1. Tues. April 2 at the Letter Carriers on the North Side,
- 2. Tues. April 9 at St. James AME Church in East Liberty (East Side)
- 3. Tues. April 16 at Beulah Baptist Church in Beltzhoover (South Side)



Thirty nonpartisan organizations have joined together to form the Voting is Power Pittsburgh Regional Coalition. Representatives gathered on March 5 to kick off their campaign with a press conference. Judy Clack, in white LWV shirt on the left, spoke about Vote411.

LWVGP Voter · March 2024 · Page 6

Vote411.org for the Primary is live!

Enter your home address to find information about the candidates on your own ballot. **Nine** LWVPGH members contacted the **48** Allegheny County candidates to encourage them to participate in **Vote411** after others gathered candidate contact information: emails, phones, Facebook pages, and campaign websites. 32/48 candidates (or 66%) have responded to date.

Ruth Quint and her Website Committee have addedPrimary Election content to our website. Go toIwvpgh.org and review the homepage and also thePrimary Elections Basics page. Soon a list of all the

Allegheny County candidates with their district maps will be posted along with Mini-Guides of both local and statewide candidates in contested races.



Judy Clack, VP Voter Service, did a presentation at The Waters of Wexford about the Primary Election and registered five residents to vote and receive a mail-in ballot.

Allegheny County needs poll workers, and there are multiple ways to sign up.

- 1. Complete the <u>online application</u>.
- 2. Call the Allegheny County Division of Elections at 412.350.4500, option 5.
- 3. Email them at alleghenyelectionworkers@alleghenycounty.us.
- 4. Go to the Elections Division Office in the County Office Building, Room 312, 542 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, 15219. (It's a maze to get there.)

Also, check out the Student Poll Worker Program page for details on how teens can be poll workers..

Primary Day Conflicts with Passover

April 23, 2024, the date of the Primary Election, falls on the first day of Passover. This means that some Jews will not be going to the polls in person on April 23, that Jewish poll workers could be resigning for that day, and that some polling places must be reassigned. Two weeks before the election, Allegheny County Elections Division will mail a postcard to every voter whose polling place has been changed. The Department of State and LWVPGH are promoting the use of Mail-In Ballots for Jewish voters.



Senior Outreach Committee Chair, Linda Schneider, makes calls to building managers to confirm the number of door hangers they want delivered.

Seventeen LWVPGH members either attended the Senior Outreach Packing Bee of 11,000 Door Hangers and 5,500 Your Government Officials and/or are now delivering packets to senior buildings and senior centers in the County. Linda Schneider reached out to 229 senior residences and 43 senior centers to determine if they wanted door hangers and/or Your Government Officials. Then Linda coordinated the 73 requesting locations with a LWVPGH volunteer. Kathy Herbst accepted delivery of all the materials and hosted the March 6 Packing Bee. See the map of the geographical distribution of these locations on the next page or as a larger version here.

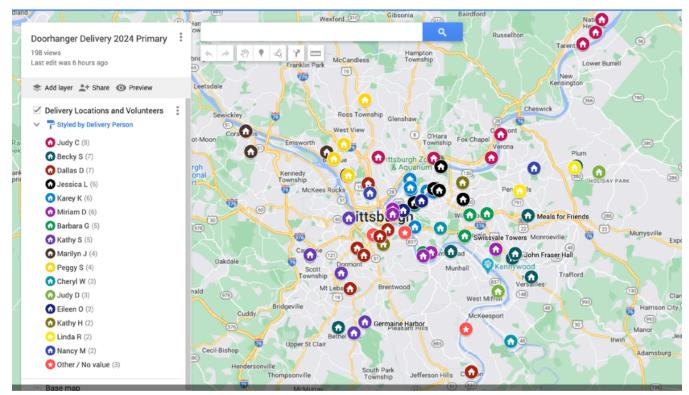
The Senior Outreach Committee collaborated with the Faith-Based Committee to produce *Get Ready to Vote* as a one-page (rather than twopage) document to be distributed to over 270 senior contacts and over 400 faith-based and Spanish contacts. **Ruth Quint** designed it. Note the new mailin ballot envelopes. See the <u>English</u> and <u>Spanish</u> versions here, or on the homepage of our website: <u>Iwvpgh.org</u>.

Twenty-eight shifts at eight food distribution walk-up or drive-up food distribution events for the **Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank** will be covered by LWVPGH members from March 16 to April 13. **Kathy Herbst** organized this project. About 2,000 clients will receive an LWVPGH magnet and a copy of *Your Government Officials*.

Continued on next page



Seven LWVPGH volunteers display some of the 11,000 doorhangers they packaged to go to senior residences and senior centers. Left to right: Alan Schneider, Karey Kluesner, Kathy Herbst (host), Marilyn Jenkins, Linda Schneider (chair), Becky Studer, and Dallas DiLeo.



Seventeen LWVPGH volunteers spread out around Allegheny County to deliver Senior Outreach Committee's door hangers and the 2024 edition of Your Government Officials: Facts for Citizens Directory.

FIVE DROP OFF LOCATIONS WILL BE OPEN THE TWO WEEKENDS BEFORE ELECTION DAY, AND "OVER THE COUNTER" VOTING AND BALLOT DROP OFF WILL BE AVAILABLE DOWNTOWN

There will be expanded services for Allegheny County voters for the 2024 elections. In addition to ballot drop off and "over the counter" voting services at the downtown County Office Building (542 Forbes Avenue), the County Elections Division will also operate five staffed absentee/mail-in ballot drop off locations.

The additional five drop off locations will be open the two weekends before election day:

Saturday, April 13 and April 20, 9 am – 5 pm Sunday, April 14 and April 21, 11 am – 7 pm

The five locations are distributed geographically across the county to give all voters easier access to a secure ballot drop off location. Voters may drop off mail-in or absentee ballots at these five locations:

East End: Carnegie Public Library of Squirrel Hill

5801 Forbes Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15217

South: South Park Ice Rink 30 Corrigan Drive

Bethel Park, PA 15102

North: North Park Ice Rink

1200 Pearce Mill Road Wexford, PA 15090

East: Boyce Park Four Seasons Lodge

901 Centerview Drive Plum, PA 15239

West: 911 Call Center

150 Hookstown Grade Road Moon, PA 15108

An important reminder: <u>each voter may only return their own ballot</u> unless they have completed authorization forms to turn in a ballot on behalf of someone who physically is unable to return their ballot. If you require assistance in voting or returning a ballot, please call 412-350-4500 for further information.

Weekend drop off locations accept completed ballots only. There are no provisions for "over the counter" voting at these sites.

As in recent past elections, the County Office Building (COB) will be open for voters to apply for mail-in or absentee ballots and vote in person ("over the counter voting"), as well as drop off completed mail-in ballots. Over the counter voting is available on the first floor of the COB at 542 Forbes (the corner of Forbes Avenue and Ross Street) as soon as ballots are ready, approximately 30 days prior to Election Day.

Additionally, completed mail-in and absentee ballots may be dropped off at the Ross Street entrance of the COB Monday, April 15 – Thursday, April 18 from 8:30 am-4:30 pm; Friday, April 19 from 8:30 am – 8 pm; Saturday, April 20 from 9 am – 5 pm; Sunday, April 21 from 11 am – 7 pm; the day before Election Day, Monday, April 22 from 8:30 am-8 pm; and Election Day drop off hours are the same as the polling hours, 7 am-8 pm. Voters using the Ross Street drop off may park briefly using the lane closest to the COB while returning their ballot.

BOOK CLUB REPORT by Joan Cucinotta

Next Meeting

For our next meeting, we decided to read James Baldwin. Members may choose either Notes of a Native Son or I Am Not Your Negro. For April, we decided to learn more about AI, (Artificial Intelligence) an umbrella term for the new computer systems that can perform highly complex tasks. We will do our own research and report. If anyone knows someone who would come to our meeting to help us learn more, (in the way Ron Bandes spoke at our meeting on cryptocurrency) that would be wonderful. Looking ahead past April, we are interested in a book coming out at the end of this month called Attack from Within: How Disinformation Is Sabotaging America by Barbara McQuade.

COMMENTARY FOR STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND

Our book for February, *Strangers in their Own Land. Anger and Mourning on the American Right,* is an important book addressing the ongoing problem of <u>cognitive dissonance</u> that plagues some of our country's voters regarding their support for extractive industries that harm their communities. The author, Arlie Russell Hochschild, is currently a professor emeritus of sociology at the <u>University of California, Berkeley</u> and a prolific writer whose work focuses on emotional elements that impact public issues. You may be familiar with one of her earlier works, *The Second Shift* (2012), which examines the disparities in labor for those in dual-career marriages. The title refers to the additional but uncompensated labor assumed by working women in dual-income families. *Strangers in Their Own Land* measures a similar disconnect in the lives of ordinary Americans who live and work in close proximity to industrial polluters. She finds that even though these people (who are mostly Republican and Southern) personally suffer the devastating illnesses associated with environmental pollution, they do not (or will not) acknowledge that they are the casualties of the very industries they support. In fact, they are direct supporters of these industries, a disconnect Hochschild calls "The Great Paradox."

Hochschild has an admirable and comprehensive approach to this sociological exploration. She relies on a wealth of statistics, but she also spent a year in Louisiana (one of the states most afflicted with environmental damage from industry) getting to know people personally who are on the front lines of environmental disasters but who either ignore, overlook, or just accept the consequences. Although most of the people afflicted with the consequences of industrial pollutants are Republicans, her lengthy interviewing helps to humanize them and helps the reader see how and why some people persist in voting and supporting policies that only end up harming themselves. Hochschild attributes the pervasiveness and continuity in this "Great Paradox" to specific religious, political, and cultural beliefs that all elevate the notion of endurance and loyalty to one's chosen community over all else.

She talked to many people in Louisiana about the devastating hardships in their state from the infamous and catastrophic failures of state and federal agencies after Hurricane Katrina (2005) to the BP Deep Horizon oil spill (2010), called "the worst environmental disaster America has ever faced." After the BP devastation, the Louisiana legislature set up a commission that found that the necessary solutions for the problems had already been built into the contracts of the oil companies in the state. But when the legislature moved to sue the oil companies, Governor Bobby Jindal closed the commission, had the legislature nullify the lawsuit, and thereby transferred the cost of repairs from the oil companies to Louisiana taxpayers. Nonetheless, such deceptions are overlooked. As one Louisianan she interviewed said, "Pollution is the sacrifice we make for capitalism."

One of the most valuable elements of the book is "Appendix C: Fact Checking Common Impressions" which does just that. Many of the frequent delusions about the scale of environmental impact from industry held by the right-wing are answered with clarifying facts that dispel the frequent ploys of disinformation. But perhaps the most important element of this book is that it is not a red-state bashing book. She praises the "good angels" of the South for "their patience in waiting in unstable economic times, their capacity for loyalty, sacrifice, and endurance," and their tight communities. The good angels of the North, Horchschild notes, commit to building large public spaces and services (i.e. big public squares, museums for kids, public art,

libraries, and schools), and inclusivity. Those on the left have also been feeling the sense of being a "stranger in their own land" as they watch many of their public spaces gobbled up by McMansions and their public services sold off to price gouging privatization. Hochschild shows us that both red and blue have virtues that, if cultivated and accepted, would help knit the country together.

Pennsylvanians especially should remember that our own tax dollars have gone to oil and gas industries in the form of incentives. Like Louisiana, our tax dollars have been used to provide infrastructure specific to the needs of those industries, and tax dollars have gone to local emergency response services. Pennsylvanians also suffer the cost and pain of the health issues that follow the fracking industry. A grand jury concluded in 2020 that "State regulators have failed to prevent Pennsylvania's natural gas drilling industry from sickening people and poisoning air and water." Governor Shapiro has been addressing the problem and promises better regulation, transparency, and a cleaner environment. The agreement he signed recently with the fracking companies includes their voluntary "intention" to follow health and safety reforms. However, elements of this arrangement bear similarities to what happened in Louisiana. Our own DEP has been shown lacking in putting teeth into existing regulations, and it may not be a good idea to put any faith into contracts made with fracking companies. It appears that we, like Louisiana, also suffer from the Great Paradox.

LWVPGH Officers / E	Executive Committee	Local Area Meeting Chairs			
President (and Advocacy)	Michele Knoll	Pgh. Central 412-477-7572	Martha Raak		
V.P.1 Administration	Preston Shimer	North Hills 412-779-3089	Nancy Mott		
V.P.2 Voter Service	Judy Clack	South Hills 412-760-9642	Laryn Finder		
V.P.3 Development	Nancy Naragon				
V.P.4 Program	Barbara Grabowski				
Secretary	Kathy Herbst				
Treasurer	Bridget McDonald				
Dire	ctors	Interest & Service Area Specialists			
Advocacy	Tracy A. Battle	Election Integrity	Ron Bandes		
Membership, Naturalization	Judy Diorio	VOTER Editor	Sue Broughton		
Social media	Emily Ferri	Book Club	Joan Cucinotta		
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Terrie Griffin	Gov. relations, Outreach	Jackie Dixon		
Publicity & Public Relations	Tené Croom	Pres emerita, Leg update	Maureen Grosheider		
Civic Education	Amy Kleissas	Science and Environment	Don Naragon		
Webmaster	Ruth Quint	Blast	Eileen Olmsted		
Budget	Ellie Siegal	Vote411 & Voter Guides	Annette Shimer		
		Vote411 & VG assistant	Michelle Zmijanac		
Staff					
Community Information Center	Manager: Jenna Latour Nichols	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			
Facebook	www.facebook.com	Search: League of Women Vo	Search: League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh		