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Our Story

Mission

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is a statewide, nonpartisan organization. Our state office oversees a grassroots network of 33 local Leagues across Pennsylvania.

Since our founding in 1920, the League has served as a trusted, responsive voice that holds the government accountable to its citizens.

LWVPA encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The purpose is to create in citizens a sense of responsibility for local, state, and national issues. Through research and advocacy, LWVPA seeks to encourage the informed citizen who actively participates in government.

The League’s enduring vitality and resonance comes from its grassroots nature, with members operating at the state and local levels working towards the goal of "making democracy work."
Dear League Members,

I am honored to have served over 2 years as your state League President. We have accomplished so much in 2021 to advance our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy, and I eagerly anticipate working with you all in 2022.

As one of the county's oldest nonpartisan organizations, the League of Women Voters has educated voters, encouraged informed civic engagement in Pennsylvania politics, and advocated for free and fair democracy for over 100 years. As a League member for almost a decade, it has been so heartening to see our grassroots advocacy community grow in ability and diversity in the face of continued challenges to our civic life. I am privileged to be your President in this time. I am particularly proud of three League accomplishments in 2021:

**Welcoming Our New Board:** In June, the state League welcomed a diverse group of talented women to our Board of Directors. These women bring unique perspectives and lived experiences to the work of the League.

**Success of FDPA and the Shale Project:** Two projects powered by the League, Fair Districts PA and the Straight Scoop on Shale, have made great strides in fighting for fair representation and environmental justice in Pennsylvania. Read more about their work in this report!

**Success of virtual convention:** In the face of a global pandemic, I am proud to say that the League never faltered, instead adapting our biennial convention to its first ever virtual format. While I missed seeing our community in person, the virtual Convention welcomed the most members we have ever seen into important League decision-making processes.

We have come so far this year. I look forward to another year in League with you all.

Sincerely,
Dr. Terrie Griffin, President
Dear League Members,

I recently celebrated one year of working for LWVPA. It seems like just yesterday I was coming aboard during the high-stakes 2020 election cycle. One year later, the stakes remain just as high. Despite the challenges currently facing our democracy infrastructure in Pennsylvania, I continue to be grateful to work for the League every day. Our work remains highly relevant, and I’m honored to work for an organization with a trusted, non-partisan voice in an uncertain time. Some highlights from this year I’m most proud of:

**Taking a Stand to Protect Democracy:** The results of the 2020 election are currently being subjected to a partisan review by the PA State Senate. LWVPA recently won a major victory in our fight to protect voters from this unnecessary and costly review. The League and our partners will continue to raise the interests of voters when their privacy becomes politicized.

**New Faces at the League:** This year, I’m thrilled to have launched the LWVPA fellowship program, bringing 6 talented graduate students into League work. Out of the fellowship program came Samantha Anthony, who we recently hired as LWVPA’s first ever Operations & Membership Associate! Thank you for your support of the fellowship program, which brings much needed energy and capacity to our statewide initiatives.

**Expanding our Grassroots network:** Our grassroots network of 33 Local Leagues is the foundation of our democracy work. This year, we committed to strengthening the capacity of local Leagues across Pennsylvania. We were also pleased to welcome a new Member at Large Unit to Westmoreland County to our statewide network!

Your support makes our work possible. On behalf of our staff, I’m excited to see where we grow in 2022.

In League,
Meghan Pierce, Executive Director
Meet OUR FELLOWS

KAILA CANTENS
M.A. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, UPENN

SARAYA LOUISSANT
M.P.A
UPENN

GABY HARTNEY
M.P.A.
UPENN

ZAINA BOU DABO
M.P.A.
UPENN

MARISA BALANDA
B.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

SAM ANTHONY
M.P.P.
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

"My time as a fellow at LWVPA taught me to be resilient, to stand for what I believe in, and to be a confident woman and advocate."
-Gaby Hartney, Policy & Communications Fellow
A League of Their Own: Westmoreland County’s New MAL Unit

In August 2021, the League recognized our new Westmoreland County Member At Large unit. The unit has grown to over 45 members, with a dedicated leadership team of 10 passionate volunteers. In 2021, WCLWV offered voter registration training to its members and held ten voter registration events across the county. In addition to offering voter registration at these events, members talked to over 400 members of the public to provide voting information! The Westmoreland MAL Unit is excited to increase membership, create active committees, develop relationships among members, and secure funds to support their educational and voter outreach. The League looks forward to serving the community of Westmoreland County!
2021
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PENNNSYLVANIA LEAGUES

5,319
Voters Registered Through Vote411

10,504
Voters Contacted

7,169
Volunteer Hours

338
Election Related Activities
During a tumultuous year for our state, the League’s activities and advocacy were more important than ever. Our statewide committees forged ahead to do the important work of protecting Pennsylvania democracy. Interested in joining a committee yourself? Contact info@palwv.org.

The Voter Services Committee met weekly to share best practices on voter accessibility, election reform, and voter education across Pennsylvania. The committee trained its members to moderate forums and educate voters on a local level. Members also created detailed voter’s guides in Vote411, a national voter education tool. Local League members carried this important work into their own communities.

The Government Policy Committee watched state capitol activities. With a focus on election policy and reform, the committee’s work made the League a leader in fighting against unfair election rules like HB 1300 and HB 1800, notably joining the recent litigation to fight the illegitimate PA election review. League members also presented to the public, created policy analysis, and sent out action alerts, thus allowing citizens to conduct their own advocacy.

The Social Policy Committee is the League’s newest committee. Board members separated government and social policy work in 2021 to allow for more detailed and specific advocacy on important issues. The committee made great strides in a short time, researching issues like fair funding in schools, gun safety, broadband access, and critical race theory. We look forward to their continued progress in 2022!

The Environmental Policy Committee worked from the ground up on issues most important to local Leagues and their communities. Members published articles in the 2021 Communicators, getting the word out about current issues. Committee members joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Coalition and the Clean Energy Coalition, which allowed the League to better spread awareness and educate citizens.

The Straight Scoop on Shale launched two new Reimagine groups in 2021: Reimagine Fayette County, and Reimagine Cambria and Blair Counties, Visioning Sustainable Development. These groups help local citizens envision sustainability in their communities. Task forces for specific projects then move toward implementation. 2021 was also the first year of the Reimagine Jobs Showcase, a website about sustainable careers and jobs. Finally, the project and the League held the ninth annual Shale & Public Health conference in November.
DEI does not exist separately from the core mission of LWVPA. It is integral to our work in defending democracy, increasing voter engagement, and creating a more inclusive culture across the state. After a challenging 2020 election year, the Board of Directors recognized a need for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) education, programming, and support within our organization. Without this, the League cannot fulfill its mission in a way which benefits all Pennsylvanians.

In 2021, we actively engaged in interactive DEI education for our entire membership, supported new, inclusive advocacy programs, and evaluated organizational practices and structure on a DEI basis. An off-board Equity Steering Committee, composed of community representatives, advocates, government officials, and organizers from around the State, provides further support and accountability. DEI representatives from local Leagues across the state formed a group with the purpose of developing best practices for implementing DEI, sharing ideas and support, and developing learning tools and materials.

Understanding bias, difference, and racism builds our capacity to be inclusive, connected, and welcoming of new partnerships and innovative ideas. We look forward to continuing this important work in 2022.
FDPA made great strides toward fair redistricting this year.

January kicked off with a massive effort to end House Bill 38, a judicial gerrymandering bill. FDPA volunteers developed robust educational tools to explain the impact to courts and judges. These materials mobilized a broad spectrum of advocates and organizations to stop this bill. Evidence suggests that FDPA led the charge and a wide range of citizens and organizations used these tools to make their voices heard.

Legislators reintroduced The Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Act (LACRA) with bipartisan support. In February, volunteers kicked off a massive advocacy campaign with a high goal: constituent meetings with every PA state legislator to get LACRA passed quickly. 800 volunteers contacted every PA state legislator in two months and recorded over 170 constituent visits!

March and April included town halls to help PA understand the impact of prison gerrymandering. This built the foundation for direct advocacy when the Legislative and Reapportionment Commission met to decide how to count prisoners. Supporters successfully advocated for counting prisoners where they lived prior to incarceration. FDPA partnered with Decarcerate PA, the Abolitionist Law Center, Straight Ahead, Free the Ballot, Pennsylvania Council of Churches Advocacy and the ACLU - Pennsylvania.

July kicked off “Speak Up for Fair Maps,” a program including testimony training, a mapping contest, and a statewide mapping conversation. FDPA formed a mapping team to lead the charge in creating the final maps to be submitted to the LRC. Local experts pointed out how confusing the redistricting process is with “Commissions, Committees and Confusion, Oh My” and hammered home that “Testimony is Advocacy Power.” Supporters also learned how to testify at local hearings. In addition, FDPA’s mapping process brought new conversations about the Voting Rights Act and Racial Equity. After a busy year, we look forward to FDPA's work in 2022!
Meet
OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DR. TERRIE GRIFFIN  SAMANTHA APGAR  MELISSA WRIGHT

DR. ALISON LOLAND WYANT  JENNIFER HANF  KATHY COOK

SUSAN GOBRESKI  TANIA ISAAC HYMAN  SARAH MILLER

REV. CAROLYN CAVANESS  BETSY MURRAY

"I joined the League because I believe in its mission of empowering voters and encouraging citizens to get involved in the democratic process."
-Sarah Miller, Director of Social Policy
We are proud of our great progress towards empowering voters and defending democracy in 2021. Next year, the work of nonpartisan groups like the League will be more critical than ever. Help advance our mission in 2022 by becoming a member of the League, making a donation, or volunteering your time as a member of a Statewide committee.

The LWVPA Staff
Meghan Pierce, Executive Director
Rae Neubaum, Office Administrator
Samantha Anthony, Membership & Operations Associate

We've got work to do in 2022. Show your support.

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