



The Voter

Autumn 2020

Please send feedback or questions about the newsletter to slstout@westpa.net. Throughout, text in **GREEN** highlights opportunities for you to take action.

1. **Please send your annual dues (\$55, more if you'd like) to Michelle Gray, PO Box 912, Warren, PA 16365**
2. October 15, 2020: Candidate Forum between Senator Scott Hutchinson and his challenger, Shelbie Stromyer *on page 2*.
3. November 8, 2020: League of Women Voters Annual Meeting at the Wilder Museum, Irvine, PA *on page 2*
4. Have you seen the Trailblazers video yet? Learn more *on page 2*.
5. November 17, 2020: LWVWC-sponsored GoToMeeting presentation by Warren County Commissioners: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Health and Economy of Warren County *on page 3*.
6. The League of Women Voters of the US is 100 years old in 2020 *on page 3*.
7. Pennsylvania courts have been active regarding voting *on page 4*.
8. Gerrymandering in PA: Fair Districts has remained active and engaged despite setbacks in the legislature in 2020 *on page 4*.
9. LWVWC is active on many fronts regarding voter registration, education, and services *on page 5*.
10. We will need a new Government Directory after the 2020 elections. LWVWC is already at work *on page 5*.
11. While Ruth Bader Ginsburg was not a member of our League, many of us were and are inspired by her lifetime commitment to civil discourse and opportunity for all. We urge a deliberate replacement process *on page 6*.

In Memoriam -- Ruth Bader Ginsburg

"To make life a little better for people less fortunate than you, that's what I think a meaningful life is. One lives not just for oneself but for one's community."

Please send your annual dues (\$55, more if you'd like) to Michelle Gray, PO Box 912, Warren, PA 16365

October 15, 2020: Candidate Forum between Senator Scott Hutchinson and his challenger, Shelbie Stromyer *on page 2.*



On Thursday, October 15th the League of Women Voters of Clarion County and [Explore Clarion](#) will sponsor the live streaming of a debate on [Explore Clarion](#) for the PA Senate District 21 seat, with candidates Scott Hutchinson (R) and Shelbie Stromyer (D). We believe that the live-streaming will be on the Explore Clarion site.

[Hutchinson](#) (R), the incumbent, is seeking a third term in the Senate after ten terms in the PA House. Issues he has highlighted in recent newsletters include an energy tax credit program for manufacturing facilities that use dry natural gas, constitutional amendments limiting the governor's authority in disaster declarations, and establishing judicial districts.

[Stromyer](#) (D) (and [here](#)) has worked as an RN for most of her adult life, and recently as a nurse advocate, speaking out on patient ratios in hospitals and Medicare hours in nursing homes. She is also concerned about unregulated brine disposal associated with fracking.

Hutchinson was unresponsive to outreach from League-affiliated Fair Districts PA during the recent term. His website contains a video in which he defends the proposed constitutional amendment to create judicial districts, rather than electing judges statewide (see our League's recent Op-Ed in the Warren Times Observer about this amendment below). Neither candidate has responded to Fair Districts PA on the redistricting issue as of Oct. 5.

November 8, 2020: League of Women Voters Annual Meeting at the Wilder Museum, Irvine, PA.

The meeting will be held from 2-4 pm ***in person with masks and social distancing.*** There will be displays about the hundredth anniversary of women's suffrage, local notable women, and many other exhibits. See your League friends at a safe distance with a mask on! Hear from your officers what your League is up to, and provide your input re: upcoming programs and studies. Although wi-fi coverage at Wilder would be limited to personal hot-spots, we MAY make at least part of this meeting available via ZOOM for members who prefer not to attend in-person meetings and/or are in New Zealand or other distant locations.

Have you seen the Trailblazers video yet?

One of our local PBS stations, WQLN, produced a video documentary called, [Trailblazers - women's fight for the vote](#). The first 20 minutes tell the history of the Justice Bell and the suffragettes. The Justice Bell traveled around PA on a flatbed truck during the campaign for suffrage, with stops in Warren County. Susan Swab, Phyllis Wright and others from Warren visited a copy of the Justice Bell this summer when it was in Erie.



November 17, 2020: LWVWC-sponsored GoToMeeting presentation by Warren County Commissioners: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Health and Economy of Warren County.

The program will be 60 – 90 minutes, beginning at 6:30 pm on Thursday, November 17. With the election at least somewhat behind us, we can turn our attention to the impacts that COVID-19 have had on our community. We have asked our County Commissioners to jointly prepare a public presentation highlighting the impacts of COVID-19 on the health and economy of Warren County. We will solicit questions through our web site, and through the chat function on *GoToMeeting*, which is the county’s virtual meeting platform, and we will moderate as we do forums, combining questions and removing any personal attacks. Tricia Durbin, Jeff Eggleston, and Ben Kafferlin will all participate (at least as of this writing). **If you have questions that you’d like to submit, go to the LWVWC [web site](#) and submit them on or before November 10.**

Please use the log in information below:

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://www.gotomeet.me/warrencopa>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States (Toll Free): [1 877 568 4106](tel:18775684106)

United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3129](tel:+15713173129)

Access Code: 271-111-893

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/271111893>

The League of Women Voters of the US is 100 years old in 2020



The National League of Women Voters (LWV) is celebrating its 100th anniversary with more than 700 chapters in the USA. The Warren LWV is 58 years old. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government to shape better communities. After study and member agreement, the League supports or opposes issues, but never supports or opposes candidates or political parties.

[Accomplishments](#) of the national League in its first century include the 19th Amendment (both in Congress and ratification campaigns in many states), a national campaign to support and ensure US participation in the United Nations, support for the Equal Rights Amendment and the National Voting Rights Act. The League won an Emmy Award when it hosted the first televised presidential debate since 1960 in the 1980 election, and hosted debates again in 84, and primary debates in 1988. The League withdrew from hosting national debates in 1988 as candidates demanded increasingly partisan conditions. The League helped draft and pass the 2002 Help American Vote Act, intended to address some of the election process concerns raised by the 2000 Presidential election (Bush v. Gore). In 2006, the League launched Vote411.org, a one-stop shop for voter information, and in 2019, launched [People-Powered Fair Maps](#), a national non-partisan effort to combat partisan gerrymandering.

Pennsylvania courts have been active regarding voting

(From Common Cause): Common Cause, our state LWV and other Pennsylvania organizations, including the State Democratic Party, fought in court alongside voting advocates from across the state in cases decided on September 17, 2020. According to CNN, "One of the more significant changes set by the court on Thursday is allowing election officials to count absentee ballots received up to three days after the election, if they are postmarked by Election Day. The change means that thousands of Pennsylvanians whose votes would've been rejected for arriving after Election Day will now be counted." The decisions also clear the way for ballot drop boxes and prevents deployment of out-of-county poll watchers. The League and its allies feared such poll watchers might harass and intimidate voters-- often on the basis of race. The decisions also outlawed the candidacy of Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins on a technicality about his petition paperwork. Republican party members and their allies may respond to this win by trying to pass a bill that would make it even harder for Pennsylvanians to cast a ballot this November, and the Trump campaign continues to litigate Pennsylvania voting procedures in federal court. Keep watch for any bill that will change this court ruling.

Gerrymandering in PA: Fair Districts has remained active and engaged despite setbacks in the legislature in 2020

FAIR DISTRICTS PA

PA Voters Want Fair Districts!

Gerrymandering is a redistricting procedure that favors only one political party. Gerrymandering isn't new, but it has become much more prevalent due to computer technology that makes it very easy to redraw electoral districts in this manner. Widespread Gerrymandering has pushed our politicians to more extreme positions and makes it impossible for Congress to do its job. Similar impacts are seen in State Government. For example, in Pennsylvania during Democratic Governor Wolf's first year in office, he and the Republican legislature engaged in a nearly year-long budget battle. School Districts and Public Health agencies had to borrow money to operate since they had no incoming State Funding.

A non-partisan group called FairDistrictsPA has submitted redistricting legislation for Pennsylvania that eliminates partisan Gerrymandering. Two bills have been introduced in the House and two parallel bills in the Senate. They would replace our current system with a non-partisan 11-person independent Commission consisting of members who are not all politicians. To learn more about redistricting reform in Pennsylvania, visit www.FairDistrictsPA.com

And please contact our legislators, Representative Kathy Rapp and Senators Scott Hutchinson and Michele Brooks, to let them know that you want House Bills 22 and 23 and Senate Bills 1022 and 1023 passed into law

Enacting this legislation is time critical. It must pass in the State Legislature by Tuesday, June 30.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bill Clinger US Congress 18 years | Susan Stout & Phyllis Wright Bob Sokolski FairDistrictsPA | Susan Swab League of Women Voters of Warren Cty |
|---|---|---|

A nonpartisan project of
League of Women Voters

www.FairDistrictsPA.com

The League of Women Voters of Warren County is active in the campaign to end partisan gerrymandering in Pennsylvania. We have met with State Rep. Kathy Rapp, held info meetings for League members and Indivisibles, and communicated to the public through ads, letters to the editor, and "op-eds" in the local paper. **Many thanks to Bob Sokolski for sponsoring the WTO Fair Districts Ad!**

When the results of the 2020 census are available, PA will have to draw new legislative districts. Fair Districts PA proposed legislation to create an independent redistricting commission with objective fairness, public participation, and transparency standards to draw these new legislative districts. This legislation **did not receive a vote!!!** in either house of the PA Legislature. This was true despite wide public support, numerous co-sponsors and having the legislation available for more than a year.

Instead, the Legislature passed a constitutional amendment drafted in the last days of the session that would create judicial districts using the same partisan

No fairness in judicial redistricting

By **SUSAN L. STOUT, PHYLLIS WRIGHT and BOB SOKOLSKI**

"Don't gerrymander judges! As required by law, the Secretary of the Commonwealth placed a public notice in the Warren Times Observer and other newspapers across the state concerning proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution on Monday, Aug. 3.

We would like to provide some context for the third of these proposed amendment Joint Resolution 2020-3. The proposed amendment would organize "the judicial into representative districts and further provide for residency requirements."

Ultimately, if our process for drawing districts was truly fair and non-partisan, this would be a great idea. But in a state known as one of the most gerrymandered in the nation, the courts are safe from gerrymandering only because judicial elections are statewide.

Currently, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania is the only effective tool citizens have to ensure that legislative redistricting (currently done by a highly partisan committee of legislators, selected by party leaders), done in compliance with the State Constitution. In 2018, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that the redistricting done after the 2010 census created unconstitutional gerrymandered districts for our members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The proposed constitutional amendment assigns the task of establishing the number and boundaries of the new judicial districts to the very same General Assembly that drew unconstitutional districts for our legislative districts in 2010.

Joint Resolution 2020-3 proposes a constitutional amendment that would make gerrymandering in Pennsylvania much worse. Judges, like legislators, would be elected from districts drawn by the party in power for the benefit of the party in power.

Let your legislators know that you want them to oppose this amendment until the laws and constitutional amendment we need to ensure that legislative districts and any future judicial districts are drawn in an objectively, measurably fair manner: not red, blue, but fair. Creating a fair redistricting process in Pennsylvania requires both legislative action and a referendum, and should let our legislators know this redistricting reform must precede creation of judicial districts!

Susan L. Stout, Phyllis Wright and Bob Sokolski are members of the League of Women Voters of Warren County.

process now used to draw legislative districts. The significance of this is that the courts have been the only barrier to hyperpartisan gerrymandering, and this barrier would be removed if the constitutional amendment were to pass.

Fair Districts PA was founded in January 2016 by representatives from the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, Common Cause Pennsylvania, Committee of Seventy, Pennsylvania Council of Churches, and others concerned about accountable government. Today, Fair Districts PA is officially a project of the **League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania**.

Fair Districts PA wants to stop gerrymandering in Pennsylvania by bringing the redistricting process out from behind closed doors, letting the public participate and enforcing strict map-drawing rules.

[The Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Act \(LACRA\)](#) will do exactly that. Introduced in both houses of the PA Legislature by Rep. Wendi Thomas (R-178th) as [House Bill 2638](#) and Sen. Tom Killion (R-9th) as [Senate Bill 1242](#), LACRA is a strong bipartisan bill with both Republican and Democratic co-sponsors.

[Please take the time to write to our legislators asking them to support HB 2638 \(Rep. Rapp\) or SB 1242 \(Senators Hutchinson or Brooks\)](#)

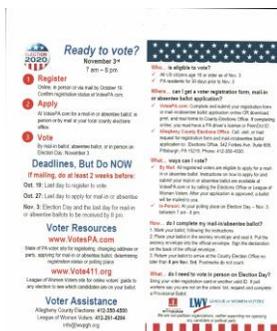
Here are links to the contact pages for each of them. It's a good idea to write a single short, clear, single-issue message before going to the contact sites. Then copy your message into each site and submit.

[Representative Kathy Rapp](#)

[Senator Michelle Brooks](#)

[Senator Scott Hutchinson](#)

LWVWC is active on many fronts regarding voter registration, education, and services.



Jane Dunshie and Sally Beckerink have taken the lead on our voter education and service activities, preparing flyers and outreach materials to help voters navigate the complex world of voter registration, mail-in ballot applications, etc. in the world of the pandemic. Beckerink has been working with National Honor Society Chapters at several local high schools to prepare videos showing people whom students know going through the steps of registering and voting. Dunshie has been preparing flyers and also working with counselors at the high schools to be certain that students who will be 18 by November 3 have the info that they need to register and vote.

We will need a new Government Directory after the 2020 elections. LWVWC is already at work.

Jane Dunshie and Sally Eaton will take the lead on producing a new Government Directory, reflecting local, state, and national office-holders elected or continuing after the 2020 elections. We will again seek financial support from the Sally Sokolski Memorial Fund. **Contact Jane or Sally if you would like to help.**

**2019
Government Directory**



A Community Service of
**The League of Women Voters
of Warren County**
and
G & S Graphics

Funded by:
The Sally Sokolski Memorial Fund
of the Community Foundation
of Warren County

While Ruth Bader Ginsburg was not a member of our League, many of us were and are inspired by her lifetime commitment to civil discourse and opportunity for all.



The League of Women Voters of Warren County joins our national headquarters in calling for “a Supreme Court confirmation process that builds trust in our system and ensures an independent judicial branch.”

In 2016, the United States Senate believed that a Supreme Court vacancy could sit empty for 300 days to allow the voters to express their preference through their votes in a presidential election. Thus, they refused to consider the nomination of a judge with strong intellectual credentials and proven integrity and judicial character. In recent years, the average time between a Supreme Court nomination and the confirming vote has been 68 working days – which is less time than remains in the current Senate term.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government to shape better communities. After study and member agreement, the League supports or opposes issues, but never supports or opposes candidates or political parties. Thus, our position is not based on the nominee who has been put forward, but on the integrity of the nomination, investigation, and confirmation process. Our concern about the process is only made more serious by the recent surge of confirmed COVID-19 cases among senators.

As the League of Women Voters of the United States said in their September 23, 2020 press release, “Supreme Court justices serve for life and make decisions that impact every American. They require a thorough vetting process that is transparent to the American people. Such a process would be undermined if rushed through. Now is not the time to rush a lifetime appointment to the United States Supreme Court.” **We urge all who agree to contact Senators [Bob Casey](#) and [Patrick Toomey](#) to let them know of your support for a more deliberative process.**

(This article is the text of a letter to the Editor submitted on behalf of LWVWC on October 7, 2020)

Ruth Bader Ginsburg:

“When I’m sometimes asked ‘When will there be enough (women on the Supreme Court)?’ and my answer is: [‘When there are nine.’](#) People are shocked. But there’d been nine men, and nobody’s ever raised a question about that.”

“I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the best of her ability.”

“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.”

“Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.”