



League of Women Voters of Mercer County

February 2017

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Legislative Interview Luncheon 2017



Over sixty people attended the 2017 Legislative Interview program that was held at the Community Library of the Shenango Valley on Friday, January 27. Legislators in attendance were: Senator Michele Brooks (50th District), Representative Mark Longietti (7th District), and Representative Parke Wentling (17th District). Representative Tedd Nesbit (8th District), who had a commitment in another county, was unable to attend. Questions from the LWVPA included the following topics: redistricting reform, voter access reform, education funding reform, and environmental protection.

Lyn Weidner moderated the program, and Dr. Sam Woodings was the timekeeper. Pat Woodings was in charge of audience questions. A note of thanks to the chapter members who contributed to the chili luncheon, a tradition at our Legislative Interview programs. A special thank you to Diane Esposito, our chapter's chili chef.

Gerrymandering: PA Issues



Tony Crocamo of Fair Districts PA was invited to place gerrymandering in Pennsylvania under the microscope to view its impact on the election process in our state. Fair Districts PA is a coalition of citizens and organizations that seek to reform our commonwealth's redistricting rules "to make the process of drawing districts impartial, transparent, and accountable." The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is a part of this coalition. Seventy-five attendees heard his informative presentation at the Community Library of the Shenango Valley on Saturday, February 18.

Mr. Crocamo first presented an overview of gerrymandering in our state and its effects. A graphic in the presentation showed Pennsylvania's seventh district that is claimed to be the most gerrymandered district in the United States. He noted that with the tools of today's technology, creating districts advantageous to a party can be accomplished with a new ease. With Pennsylvania's current twenty electoral votes, our state is an important target.

He also noted that Pennsylvania district boundaries are drawn by a commission that is comprised of five members. The majority and minority leaders of the Pennsylvania State Senate each appoints one member; the majority and minority leaders of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives each appoints one member. These four commissioners appoint a fifth member to serve as the chair. If the commission is unable to reach an agreement, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court must appoint a commission chair. Fair Districts PA supports an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution that provides for the creation of an independent, impartial citizen redistricting commission as an essential step toward fair, transparent and accountable elections. There is currently a bill that has been introduced to the Pennsylvania Senate by Senators Lisa Boscolla (D-15th) and Mario Scavello (R-40th) that addresses this.

The organization's website, www.FairdistrictsPA.com provides more information on its mission and programs.

LWV Issues Revisited

From time to time we will be revisiting LWV issues, reminding us of the importance of the work done by our organization. The following is from the LWV PA website, and it provides a position in brief with clickable links to learn more on the position. With a nod toward our most recent program, our first reminder is where we stand on apportionment and redistricting.

Position in Brief:

Support apportionment and redistricting based substantially on population of all voting districts, with additional consideration given to compact and contiguous territory and with respect given to municipal boundaries.

Learn more: [Where We Stand on Redistricting Reform](#) (pdf)
[What is Gerrymandering?](#) (pdf)
[Prison-Based Gerrymandering](#) (pdf)

Calendar of Events

Monthly Board Meeting
1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 4, 2017
Residence of Hannah Moses
380 Rexford Drive, Hermitage (Penn Grove Apartments)
Our monthly board meetings are open to all members. Please join us.

~CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH WITH THE LEAGUE~

WOMEN IN POLITICS: POLITICAL ODYSSEYS*
with
former Representatives to the U.S. House of Representatives
Kathy Dahlkemper and Melissa Hart

Thursday, March 16 at 6:30 PM
Sticht Lecture Hall – Hall of Art and Letters
Grove City College

*more details in coming email