



THE VOTER

Monthly News & Updates

October 2022 | Volume 99 Issue 9

Debate No-Shows Hurt Voters

When you apply for a job, there are certain things you need to do to land it.

First, you submit a good resume, then, if you're lucky enough, you get an interview. If that goes well, the people for whom you'd like to work ask for references. Based upon the information they have from those sources, they decide whether or not to hire you.

An election is much the same, but we use a primary to weed through the "resumes," we hold forums and debates for the "interview" portion of the process, and then we "check references" by researching the candidates using *The Voters Guide*, voting records, websites and social media.

But what do you do when the candidate doesn't show up for the interview? This year, more and more candidates (from each party) are opting out of live debates or forums. Yesterday, I read an **article written by Jill Zimon**, the Executive Director of the Ohio Debate Commission, which stated, "84% of Ohioans want governor (and) U.S. Senate candidates to debate," but as of September 14, despite having received formal invitations to debate in June, only Nan Whaley had confirmed her intent to participate, while Governor DeWine, Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance had not.

Our mission is to provide voters with the information they need to make informed

A conversation with Thomas Suddes



**October 4
7:00 PM**

**Fitz Center for Leadership in
Community
1401 S. Main St, Dayton**

Tom Suddes, Coordinator of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University and a regular contributor to the Dayton Daily News' "Ideas and Voices" page, will share his take on the past year in Ohio politics.

Described as "... a consistent, sharp voice about what's going on in politics. ..." by the Free Times, Tom will provide a behind the scenes view of the Statehouse. Tom is an eloquent speaker: the evening is sure to be entertaining and enlightening!

decisions at the polls, but we are also struggling to provide forums for all races because many local candidates are not responding. Now more than ever, we need to know where candidates stand on issues that are important to us. We want to get an idea of how they'll respond to our needs, and whether their values align with our own. To quote Jill, "Strong candidates show up, stand up and speak out on a debate stage together."

We'll keep offering candidates opportunities to communicate with their constituents and let them know that the voters are watching.

~Chris Corba
League Executive Director

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased on our website or by sending a check to LWVGDA
127 N. Ludlow Street, OH
45402.

[Get Tickets Here](#)



The Voters Guide is Coming! The Voters Guide is Coming!

The Voters Guide is scheduled for delivery October 6 and out for delivery throughout the community October 7. Stay tuned for information on where you can find one, and when it will be available for viewing online!

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for your generosity! The Leadership Circle appeal far surpassed our goals! Your donations and belief in the mission of the League is deeply appreciated.

Additional Leadership Circle Members as of August 31, 2022:

Stephen and Janet Frederick
Paul Gruner
Herbert Lee
Lisa O'Connell
Jenell Ross
Sinclair Community College

Jeanette Schultz
Stephanie Smith
Patricia Torvik
Kathleen and Dennis Turner
The University of Dayton
Penny Wolff

In Memory of Patty Skilken as of September 14, 2022:

Robert and Ellie Bernstein
Ann and Raymond Borelli
Andrea Cobb
Judy Dodge
Alan Duvall
Dianne Herman

Julie Kirschnick
Ron and Ann Okada
Peg Schulz
William and Patricia Seal
Andrea Zavakos



From the President's Desk

Is it October already? I love how we went from 90° to 60° seemingly overnight. That means Elections are coming – and your League is working hard to ensure that reliable, accurate and most importantly, nonpartisan, information is provided to the electorate so that we all can make reasoned, informed decisions.

Look for *The Voters Guide*, coming out October 10. Not only will the *Guide* have information on candidates for state and federal offices, it will contain information on candidates for the Ohio Supreme Court and constitutional amendments that, to date, have not gotten a lot of coverage.

At the last Board meeting we approved the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee as a Board position, with Dona Fletcher as Director. Some of you may remember her as a previous Board President. She has remained involved with the League, serving as Board Advisor for many years. She was instrumental in guiding us through the process as we work to become more inclusive.

At the request of Val Lee, her position as Action Chair was moved to an off-board position. This will free up some of her time to devote to other interests. She continues to be active in local and state League initiatives and will continue to keep us apprised of things we can take action on.

It was with great regret that we accepted the decision of Lucy Anne McCoskey to step back as *Voters Guide* Editor. She has been the leading force behind this publication since before my involvement with the League. Still engaged with the committee, you will see her name credited on the cover art this year. Andy Cobb was appointed Editor. Andy has worked on the committee for the past year and will make the transition as seamless as possible.

Who knew we had a Community Representative on the Montgomery County Sanitary Appeals Board? Not me, until recently. This is a position that was created by the County Commissioners in 1994 to hear appeals on water and sewer bills. The other members of the Board come from the Ombudsman's office and a representative from the localities served by the County. Mary Fricke was appointed in September to fill that position.

In other business, we agreed to support the Sinclair Community College Levy which

will continue to fund the Montgomery County programs without raising taxes. We are proud to join other members and organizations in this community in recognizing the importance Sinclair has to all residents.

Our Toast to Tenacity was a success and the program on “Redistricting – What Does it Mean for You?” was standing room only.

Please keep your eyes open for future events – not only for education but also a great way to connect with other League members. Constant Contact emails go out regularly and our Facebook page is a wealth of information. As always, your ideas and comments are welcome. Email them to me at the **League**. Thank you.

~Mario, LWVGDA President



Open House

We're hosting an OPEN HOUSE on Friday, October 7, from 5 PM to 7 PM at our office at 127 N. Ludlow Street. This is part of Downtown Dayton Partnership's First Friday: Festival Fall Edition. Stop by with friends or family, especially if you've never been to our office before!



Introducing our newest members:

Jan Achbach
Sophie Ameloot
Marcia Cox
Susan Ehrensberger
Wendy Knapp
Anne and Larry Lawhorne
Maureen O'Meara
Jamie Via
Andrea Zavakos



Let's Go Together!

Join us Tuesday, **October 18**, when we visit the amazing **National Museum of the US Air Force**. League member Beth Adelman has arranged for a private tour of the museum's Holocaust Exhibit with founder and curator Renate Frydman. Afterward, we'll gather at **Valkyrie Cafe** for coffee.

Please let us know you are coming **HERE**.

If you have an idea for an in-person or virtual event, exhibit, or program, please let us know! Email **Laurel Kerr** to share your ideas or to join this working committee. We are particularly looking for someone who could organize and coordinate



Redistricting Event Highlighted Need to Stay Vigilant to End Gerrymandering

Over a period of decades since the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has engaged in efforts to reform the process of drawing legislative and Congressional districts in Ohio to minimize partisan advantage. Finally, the League, in collaboration with other organizations, succeeded in passing voter-initiated amendments to the Ohio Constitution to establish requirements for fair districts when reapportionment occurred after the 2020 census. Unfortunately, the result has been that there were two primary elections, costing Ohio taxpayers an estimated 25 million dollars, and a general election to be held November 8 with unconstitutional, gerrymandered district maps.

The Redistricting/Fair Elections Committee decided that the voters in Greene and Montgomery Counties needed to know how we got into this mess and where we should go from here. Fulfilling the mission of the League to educate voters on issues of concern for defending democracy, the Committee organized a panel of experts to address these questions and held a community education forum on September 20, National Voter Registration Day, at the Dayton Metro Library. Apparently, the Committee was accurate in its assessment of voters' need to know, because the program was attended by **approximately 100 persons**, almost an overflow audience.

The program began with an overview of redistricting and the tactics that politicians use to manipulate the drawing of legislative districts to their partisan advantage, a process known as gerrymandering. Dennis Turner, Professor Emeritus of the University of Dayton School of Law, noted that politicians have used their power to ensure their re-election since the country was founded, but, with the technology now available through computers, legislators are able to do so now with precision. He then went on to provide an overview of the process that was used by the Ohio Redistricting Commission to subvert the

Learn more about redistricting reform:

Read:
Ohio Redistricting Transparency Report: The Elephant in the Room

Check out these books:

*Ratf**ked: the true story behind the secret plan to steal America's democracy* by David Daley, 2016.

One Person, No Vote: how voter suppression is destroying our democracy by Carol Anderson, 2018

One Person One Vote: a surprising history of gerrymandering in America by Nick Seabrook, 2022

Register for a FREE course on redistricting and its effects on social justice by Sinclair Community College professor **Myla Cardona-Jones**.

Watch a taped recording of

our September 20 program on DATV

Follow and get involved in the work of partner **Fair Districts Ohio**

Common Cause Ohio produced an excellent visual timeline of the history of Ohio's anti-gerrymandering journey up to today. Check it out **HERE** and share.

AND THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP: VOTE and encourage others to do the same on November 8, 2022.

reforms embedded in the Ohio Constitution to draw fair maps that ensured proportionality, compactness, competitiveness and minority representation to communities, while minimizing splits and closing the efficiency gap. When the Commission passed maps that did not meet these requirements, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled these maps unconstitutional a total of **seven** times. In response, the Commission chose to ignore these rulings, which has left voters in Ohio with elections in unconstitutional districts.

Catherine Turcer, Executive Director of Common Cause Ohio, has been working in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Ohio for a number of years on redistricting reform. She recounted the struggles reformers met, such as accusations of being “outside agitators,” which resulted in past failures to pass initiatives.

Tom Roberts, Member of the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission and President of the Ohio State Conference, NAACP, also related his experience and noted that the legislators who had supported the redistricting reforms passed in 2015 and 2018 appeared to have engaged in “bad faith” bargaining.

Gary Leppla, attorney and long-time member of our League, expressed his exasperation at politicians and members of the legal establishment who both failed to address the injustices of gerrymandering and also actively opposed reform efforts.

Additionally, Myla Cardona-Jones, Associate Professor at Sinclair College, described her work with and for incarcerated persons. She reminded the audience that there are multiple ways the electoral system is manipulated by politicians to discriminate against minorities and the poor. She gave the example of prison population counts. Prisons are based largely in rural areas, although the people held in prisons are often not from these communities. Their interests, therefore, are not represented. She also reminded us that both political parties have used reapportionment to their advantage and not to the advantage of the voters.

Many members of the panel spoke of retiring Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor's recent statement that she plans to advocate for redistricting reform once she leaves office. She has stated that the current reform as written is unenforceable and that elected officials who oversee redistricting now should be replaced with

a citizen-led commission. Many of the panelists also pointed to upcoming events that could seriously compromise any future attempts by citizens to address partisan gerrymandering in Ohio. They cited the independent state legislative theory, a legal theory that will soon be front and center before the U. S. Supreme Court, which has agreed to hear a case concerning North Carolina's congressional maps. The Court could rule that the U. S. Constitution gives state legislatures exclusive power to regulate federal elections. The result would allow state legislatures to be free to violate state constitutional rules regulating elections and state courts couldn't stop them from doing so. This could also result in some nightmare scenarios, such as dismantling citizen-initiated attempts to establish independent redistricting commissions, which is the system used in Michigan.

Members of the audience commented positively about the program. One participant described her response as not only anger, but also a motivation to do something to correct the unfair and illegal gerrymandering perpetuated by the politicians in Ohio.

~Dianne Herman and Kim Senft-Paras

DEI & Voting Services Project Aims to Increase the Number of Registered Voters

In April of 2022 The League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area, in collaboration with Sinclair Community

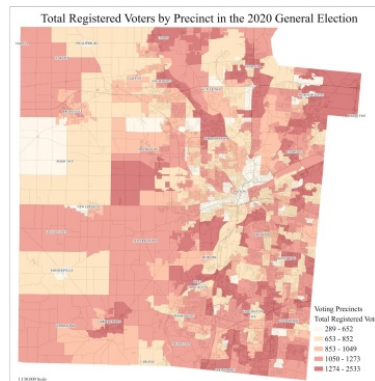
College's Department of Sociology, Geography and Social Work Department, presented a program at the *Imagining and Shaping a More Equitable Dayton Conference* which explored how social issues and geography affect active involvement in democracy.

The session used Ohio legislative maps superimposed onto maps from Sinclair's Mapping Equity Project, which illustrated the impact of the "red line" that historically divided our community along racial and socio-economic lines related to voter access and participation. The session focused on the challenges and barriers faced by those with limited resources to exercise their right to vote.

The DEI & Voting Services Project was created with the goal of increasing the number of registered and active voters in the areas most affected by redlining in our community.

The project will use the voting maps created by Dr. Jacqueline Housel and students

Used



of Sinclair to identify three areas that have the lowest number of registered voters on the Dayton map. Next the team will focus on identifying community groups and organizations that have outreach programs to the residents in those areas to assist us in registering voters. The project will collect data before and after elections to see what strategies were the most effective in increasing the number of voters.

The next meeting of the Mapping Group is October 6 at 2:00 PM in the League office. If you are interested in joining the team please contact Mario, Chris Cobra, Jo Lovelace Hill, Dianne Herman or Jacqueline Houseil or call the League office at **937.228.4041**.

~Dona Fletcher

UPCOMING CALENDAR

October 4: A Conversation with Tom Suddes, 7 PM

October 4: LWV All Member Meeting, 12:00 PM

October 5: Yom Kippur

October 6: DEI Mapping Group Meeting, 2 PM

October 10: Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 10: Finance Meeting, 4:30 PM

October 10: Board Meeting, 6:00 PM

October 10: Presentation at the AAUW of Middletown, 7:00 PM

October 11: DEADLINE REGISTER TO VOTE by 9 PM

October 11: Lobby Corps 12:00 PM

October 11: Funding and Development Committee, 4:00 PM

October 11: Membership Committee, 7:00 PM

October 11: Presentation at Woodbourne Library: Voting Issues, 7:00 PM

October 12: START of Absentee Voting by Mail and Early In-Person Voting

October 12: Behind the Ballot with Girl Scouts of Southwestern Ohio, 6:00 PM

October 13: Candidate Meet and Greet, Woodbourne Library, 7:00 PM

October 18: Let's Go Together @ National Museum of the US Air Force

October 19: Presentation, Washington Twp. Recreation Center, Redistricting, 1:00 PM

October 20: Naturalization Ceremony, Dayton Metro Library, 11:00 AM

October 20: Presentation Federally Employed Women: *The Voters Guide*, 6:00 PM

October 20: Candidate Forum, Wright Memorial Public Library, 7:00 PM

October 25: Lobby Corps Call, 12:00 PM

October 25: Voter Service Call, 7:00 PM

October 31: Halloween



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