



CONGRESSIONAL SHADOW HEARING

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Who We Are and Why We're Here

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania is a 106-year-old statewide, nonpartisan organization, with nearly 10,000 members and supporters in 66 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. We are not a think tank or a litigation shop; we are a grassroots organization. We are the people showing up to register new citizens, to register first-time voters on college campuses, to register voters in our communities at festivals and parades and public libraries, making sure every eligible Pennsylvanian is able and knows how to participate in our democracy.

This ground-level presence is why I am here today: to tell you what we are seeing, what we are doing, and what is at stake.

What We Are Seeing on the Ground

Pennsylvania voters are navigating a system whose inconsistency is codified in our election code. Each of our 67 counties has significant autonomy over how elections are administered, meaning a voter in one county has access to ballot drop boxes while a voter in the next county may not, or a voter in one county gets notified of a mail ballot error while a voter in another county does not.

This patchwork is already a challenge. Add confusion and litigation at the federal level and misinformation and disinformation on social and legacy media, and the burden on voters, and on the organizations trying to serve them, has become exponentially greater.

Reaching voters with accurate, timely information and inspiring them to participate is hard on a good day. When voters don't know what rules apply to them, when the rules change mid-cycle, and when bad actors are actively spreading misinformation about how and whether people can vote, our job gets significantly harder. The consequences of this fall hardest on voters who already face the highest barriers.

And then there are the federal proposals that would make things even worse.

The SAVE Act is not a solution to a problem that actually exists. Noncitizen voting is already illegal and rare. What the SAVE Act would actually do — requiring documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote — is create significant new barriers for millions of eligible Americans: the 69 million women whose name on their government ID doesn't match their birth certificate due to marriage or divorce, people who can't locate or afford to replace their documents, survivors of natural disasters who have lost everything including their paperwork, elderly voters, low-income voters, and communities of color who have faced historic barriers

to obtaining government documents. This bill would not protect elections. It would suppress these voices at the polls.

What We Are Doing About It

Despite this, or rather because of this, our Leagues are showing up. This fall, we have a clear, coordinated plan. In collaboration with our democracy partners, we are focused on several interconnected priorities between now and certification in December.

We are mobilizing to protect ballot access across the Commonwealth. This means advocating for pro-voter policies at the county level, monitoring and preparing for ballot challenges, observing certification proceedings, and deploying trained election protection volunteers on Election Day and in the days following, particularly in priority counties, many of which are here in Southeast Pennsylvania.

We are strengthening our own League capacity on the ground. As a trusted partner and messenger, it is more important than ever that our local Leagues are strong and that they have the resources and materials they need to educate voters, combat mis- and disinformation, and advocate for pro-voter policies in their counties. It is imperative that the people closest to voters and county elections officials have what they need to do this work effectively.

We are growing our relational and partner network with the goal of strengthening civic infrastructure in the Commonwealth and of building our organizational muscle needed to sustain this work, not just through November but for election cycles to come.

Finally, we continue to fight for voters. In Pennsylvania, this means advocating for pro-voter policies that will make the ballot more accessible and our election system more resilient. In the face of federal threats to our right to vote, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania mobilized our members and supporters to push back, and that show of force is working. So far, the threat of widespread disenfranchisement through documentary proof of citizenship requirements and burdensome voter ID mandates has been held at bay. But we are vigilant and not done fighting.

And through all of it, we register and educate voters, without pause, at universities and community colleges, at public libraries, at naturalization ceremonies, and at community fairs and festivals. We distribute voter education materials online, through webinars, and in community and candidate forums. Because the best defense of democracy is a registered, informed, and engaged electorate.

Why This Moment Matters

One of the great strengths of American democracy is that with 50 states, we have 50 laboratories of democracy, places to test what works and learn from each other. But one of its great challenges is that we don't administer one election, or even 50. There are more than 10,000 election jurisdictions in the United States. In Pennsylvania alone, 67 counties each

exercise significant discretion over how elections are run, which means election administration varies and access to the ballot is not equally distributed.

Organizations like the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, and our partners here today, are a critical part of what keeps this system from breaking down. Our members, our supporters, our local Leagues, and democracy organizations across the Commonwealth have become vital components of Pennsylvania's civic infrastructure at a moment when that infrastructure is under sustained and deliberate pressure. We remain ready to do our part and we are showing up.

I am asking this Committee and the Members here to show up with us: to use every tool available to push back on actions that are making the work of democracy harder, not easier; to hold those accountable who are misusing institutions and the Constitution; and, to stand with the organizations, our members, and the voters who are holding the line.

Thank you.