

## November 4th Is Election Day!



In these tumultuous times for our country, one of the best ways for us to weigh in on the debate about the future of our democracy is by exercising our right to vote. On November 4th, we can do just that by participating in the 2025 Municipal Election. On the ballot, there will be candidates vying for important positions in municipal and county government as well as judgeships on various courts. These prospective leaders will have a significant impact on the schools, public safety, infrastructure, services, and administration of justice in our communities

Yet, many voters do not participate in local elections. For example, in Bucks County, the voter turnout for the 2023 Municipal Election was the largest in 20 years at 42.56% of registered voters. But this turnout was far short of the General Election turnout in 2024 which reached 81.79%. Very often, voters don't participate in local elections simply because they are unfamiliar with the candidates.

### Vote411

To address this problem, the League of Women Voters offers a comprehensive and easy-to-use online resource, [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org). It provides voters with the information they will need to confidently take part in the 2025 Municipal Election. At [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org), you can enter your address to see just the specific candidates on YOUR ballot. This is particularly helpful as the number of candidates countywide can be overwhelming. [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) can help you evaluate the characteristics, skills, and experience of those running for office, and it includes candidate responses to questions posed by the League. You also can print out your choices and take them along with you to the polls.

### What are the key positions to be filled in the 2025 Municipal Election?

#### Local Government Offices

The Bucks County row offices on the ballot this year are District Attorney, Sheriff, Controller, Prothonotary, and Recorder of Deeds. Also, voters in boroughs will be electing candidates for Mayor and Council

Members, while voters in townships will select their choices for Supervisors. Also on the ballot will be municipal candidates seeking to fill the roles of Controller/Auditor and Tax Collectors. Certainly, the people who fill these Bucks County row offices and various municipal positions will be critical to the smooth operation and effective leadership of our communities.

#### School Board Candidates

Another compelling reason for voters to trek to the polls on November 4th will be filling the open positions for School Director in their districts. All voters should want to help select the individuals entrusted to oversee educational programs for children and youth as well as district personnel and school properties.

When looking over this part of the ballot, voters may be surprised to see that some candidates for School Director are listed with both Republican and Democrat labels under their names. This means that those candidates "cross-filed" and successfully ran on both party ballots in the May Municipal Primary.

While Pennsylvania school board elections are partisan, a state statute allows candidates for School Director to file for nomination by more than one political party. The candidate first must secure separate nominating petitions for each party which are to be circulated by only registered voters of the respective parties. Critics of cross-filing suggest that it is confusing for voters and can hide partisan leanings. However, candidates who embrace cross-filing contend that voters can better focus on their qualifications, and they prefer to signal their intention to serve the entire community.

#### Understanding Judicial Retention

Another very important reason to vote on November 4th is the selection of judges for various Pennsylvania courts. In Pennsylvania, when seeking their first 10-year terms as justices/judges on the Court of Common Pleas or on the appellate Commonwealth, Superior, and Supreme Courts, candidates run as members of a political party. However, after completing their first term, those seeking reelection do so by merit retention elections. Voters must select either "Yes" or "No" as to whether to keep the judge/justice on the bench for another 10-year term. Those seeking another term do not have a party affiliation listed by their name on the ballot. This is intended to convey their political neutrality as justices/judges. If voters in November choose not to retain a judge/justice, the governor, with the consent of the PA Senate, would choose a temporary

replacement, and the seat would be up for election in 2027.

While voters routinely have voted "Yes" on such retention elections, observers expect greater attention on them this year, particularly for three seats on the PA Supreme Court. As that Court has ruled on many critical issues including election law, redistricting, and individual rights, we should very much care about who sits on the bench there.

Judicial candidates generally receive little media attention, and voters often are not familiar with those seeking judicial seats as well as their functions in the courts.

Other good resources to check before heading to the polls are the Pennsylvania and Bucks County Bar Associations, which provide ratings for judicial candidates based on integrity, judicial temperament, competency, knowledge, and experience.

#### Vote on November 4th!

By voting in the Municipal Election, we as voters can use our voices to show that we care about the quality of life in our neighborhoods and the way our tax dollars are being spent. Casting a ballot on November 4th is a powerful way to show your commitment to our communities and our democracy. Your voice matters!



### EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.

The League of Women Voters of Bucks County is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to providing voter education and services and advocating for issues. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

Eileen Walkowiak is a member of the League of Women Voters of Bucks County.



215-230-9986

P.O. Box 975, Doylestown PA 18901

[LWVBucks.org](http://LWVBucks.org) | [LWVBucksPA@gmail.com](mailto:LWVBucksPA@gmail.com)

Facebook/twitter: @LWVBucksCounty