

THE VOTER

OCTOBER 2021

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

KRISTA THREEFOOT, ON BEHALF
OF CYNTHIA WILLIAMS

Dear LWVHC Members,

We hope you all enjoyed the summer months and are staying safe and healthy as the season changes. We're excited to start a new year of events and programs to educate citizens and uphold and protect democracy in our county, state, and country. Our goal this year is to increase our community outreach and engagement with communities throughout Howard County. Read on to learn more about what we have planned!

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ABOUT US

Officers:

President - Cynthia Williams

Vice President - Krista Threefoot

Secretary - Virginia Kirk

Treasurer - Barbara Russell

Directors:

Legislative Action - Linda Wengel

Communications - Colleen Cotton

Education - Lori Wells-Green

Environment - Madelyn Bloom

Fundraising - Renee Dubois

Membership Services - Shifa Shaikh

Publications - Linda Frascarella

Voter Services - Tyler McCurdy

Online Services - Laura Mettle

Student Liaison - Keriesha Brown

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (CONTINUED)

Thursday, October 21, 7:00 – 8:30: Marijuana Legality in MD: In 2012, LWVMD adopted a position in support of the “legalization of marijuana for any use, including medicinal use, subject to restrictions on production and distribution.” At this meeting, we’ll learn about the social costs of criminalizing marijuana, the status of legalization legislation, and more. Delegate Jazz Lewis, PG County, the sponsor of HB 32 will be our guest speaker. Other speakers are pending.

Thursday, November 18, 7-8:30: DC Statehood: The entire LWV organization has been a long-time supporter of statehood for the District of Columbia. Join us this November for a panel led by LWVDC covering the impact non-representation has on DC citizens, the current status on DC statehood efforts, and how we can help.

Thursday, December 16, 2021, 7-8:30 pm: Equity and Democracy through the Arts: Throughout our history, the arts have not only chronicled democracy, but they also have made democracy accessible to citizens. Join us for a discussion on democracy in the arts and why an equitable representation of our diverse country in the arts is critical to making our democracy thrive. Speakers TBD.

Stay tuned for information about future events coming up!

EQUITY IN EDUCATION, EXPANDED STUDY

KRISTA THREEFOOT

At our 2021 Annual Meeting, LWVHC members voted to undertake a second Equity in Education study. The purpose of the study is to expand LWVHC positions that specifically address equity in education.

Potential areas of study include:

- faculty diversity
- school discipline
- curriculum diversity beyond Euro-centric studies
- equity in funding for building maintenance and construction

Possible additional areas of study include:

- mental health support, specifically suicide prevention
- equity issues related to the use of and access to technology

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EQUITY IN EDUCATION, EXPANDED STUDY (CONTINUED)

In order to complete the study, we need help! Tasks include assisting in research, analyzing data, writing the study report, and writing the proposed new position. Committee members determine how they participate based on their interests, skills, and availability. It does not have to be a large time commitment -- the more help we get, the less time each individual needs to contribute.

If you're interested in helping or have questions, please contact Krista Threefoot at kthreefoot@lwvmd.com

THE CASE WITH COVID

INTERVIEW WITH DR. MAURA
ROSSMAN, HOCO HEALTH
COMMISSIONER

The League asked Dr. Maura Rossman, the HoCo Health Commissioner, a few questions regarding updates on the COVID situation:

1. What shifts have you seen in the status of COVID in HoCo since the emergence of the Delta variant?

Since the Delta variant became the predominant strain of the COVID virus, we have seen younger persons becoming infected. We have also seen breakthrough cases among persons fully vaccinated.

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THE CASE WITH COVID (CONTINUED)

2. What is the situation with COVID patients at the hospital – in other words, how is Delta affecting hospital capacity, in the ER, ICU, etc.?

Hospitalizations have been steady for several months. The unvaccinated have the highest morbidity and mortality. The vaccines are excellent at protecting against severe disease, including the need to be hospitalized.

3. How is the new Delta variant affecting children in HoCo? What precautions should parents take to protect children who can't be vaccinated?

Parents of children 12 and older should make sure their children are fully vaccinated. This is the best protection they can provide. Families with children under age 12, can best protect their children by making sure all family members who are eligible for the vaccine, are vaccinated. Everyone should wear masks when indoors in public places and outdoors when unable to socially distance. Washing hands and other cleaning strategies remain important.

4. What general precautions should HoCo residents take as we approach winter and the possibility of another surge?

We are already seeing other common viruses causing infections. Everyone should get a flu shot, as usual, wash hands often, wear a mask when indoors in public spaces, avoid crowded places, stay home if not feeling well and get tested when symptomatic.

5. We know you can't predict the future, but what are your thoughts on the possibility of new variants that are more contagious, vaccine-resistant, etc?

The best strategy to stop the pandemic is vaccinations. We need everyone to get vaccinated with the initial shot(s). And until that happens everyone must continue to wear masks when indoors and get tested when exposed or if symptoms develop.