

WORDS TO PONDER

“Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.”

Abraham Lincoln

This is a frightening statistic . . . More people vote in 'American Idol' than in any US election.

Rush Limbaugh

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In Touch with CSP

Newsletter of the Community Support Program of Bucks County

FALL 2019

Election Day—Tues Nov 5th 2019

Polls Open 7 AM to 8 PM

Vote like your life depends on it - cause it does!

If you are in line by 8 PM you must be allowed to vote!

Here are the major elected positions all Bucks Countians will be voting on

County Commissioners (4 yr Term)

Bucks County Coroner (4 Year term)

Bucks Register of Wills (4 yr Term)

Bucks County Treasurer (4 Year Term)

Bucks County Clerk of Courts (4 Year Term)

Bucks County Judge of the Court of Common Pleas (10 Yr Term)

On your individual ballot you will have other positions to vote for like - Local Magisterial District Judge to vote for (which is your local neighborhood judge), township supervisors, school board people etc.

Make a Voting Plan

Research shows that people who have a plan to vote are more likely to actually, you guessed it . . . VOTE!

From deciding when in your day you can fit in voting to knowing where to go to vote - (called your “polling place”) and doing a little research ahead to know who you will vote for, make it all the more likely that you will show up and cast your vote.

I can't help you determine when in your

day you can vote but I do want to encourage you to make it a priority because voting is the only way we have to choose our leaders who will make decisions about our lives for the next 4 to 10 years. So voting is important.

On the next pages we have provided information on where to get info on the candidates how to find ways to get to the polls and our position on the ballot question about putting victims Rights in the PA constitution.

So keep on reading!



Voter Resources



To find out what positions are up for election and get information on the candidates you will be voting for tomorrow visit these sites:

Vote411: vote411.org

Vote411 provides information on all the positions up for election your voting district just scroll down to mid page — put in your address and it will give you information on which positions are being elected and you can click on any of them to see who the candidates are and their answers to questions that were sent to them

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

- Register to Vote
- Check Your Voter Registration Status
- Find What's on Your Ballot

PERSONALIZED VOTING INFORMATION

- See What's On Your Ballot
- Check Your Voter Registration
- Find Your Polling Place
- Discover Upcoming Debates in Your Area
- And Much More!

Enter Your Address to Get Started:

Street address

City Select a state

Zip code

Bucks County Courier Times : Voters Guide : www.buckscountycouriertimes.com/news/election

With this tool you put in your address and it will take you through your specific voters ballot position by position — can read about the candidates and pick who you want to vote for and it will create a personalized ballot you can print out and take with you to the voting booth!

Bucks County Courier Times

You can cancel anytime • 4 weeks for \$9.99

Congratulations TO OUR 10 WINNERS!

Your Rider University's 280-acre Lawrenceville, NJ campus

Discover why learning is different at Rider

Voter Guide

Enter street address, city, ZIP code

Powered by **QuitoPeople**

Getting to the Polls

If you do not have transportation to get to your voter polling place but live close to public transportation, you can use SEPTA's online trip planner to find out which buses you can use to get to your destination. You will have to put in the address you are starting from and the address of your polling place, the time you want start your trip or the time you want to arrive at your destination. The trip planner will then provide you with options for getting to your destination—it even shows the places in which you would have to travel by foot from one stop to the next. Try it out at

www.septa.org.

If you are not close to public transportation and you are registered as a democrat or republican you can contact your county party committee.

Many times the party committees will have volunteers who help provide transportation to the polls for folks who would not otherwise be able to get there.

Bucks County Republican Committee can be contacted at 215-345-6811 or info@bucksgop.org.

Bucks County Democratic Committee can be contacted at 215-348-2140 or info@bucksdemocrats.org.



CSP Takes A Position on Marsy's Law Ballot Question

There is a ballot question you will be asked to vote for or against this the Nov 5th election day. Changing the state constitution is a really big deal because there is no going back. So being well informed about this issue is critical!

The CSP of Bucks County is interested in this issue because too many individuals with mental illness or addiction issues end up in the criminal justice system, many times unnecessarily. Any law that will impact the ability of an individual who is accused of a crime to avail themselves of the U.S. Constitutional protections of 1) the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and 2) the ability to gather data and information to mount a legal defense **will detrimentally affect individuals from marginalized communities** including people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty and people with mental illness and addiction.

The CSP of Bucks County's position on the Marsy's Law Ballot Question: **NO**

The short answer is we **oppose** this ballot measure. We urge individuals to take the time to become educated on this issue. If you are interested in the rights individuals **accused** (not convicted) of crimes to have access to the full rights and protections provided to them in the U.S. Constitution - **then we encourage you to vote no on this measure.**

While victim rights seem like a feel good – no brainer of an issue there are several aspects of this initiative that need to be looked at closely before one jumps on the band wagon.

The following organizations also have concerns about and oppose this proposed constitutional amendment: The League of Women Voters, the PA Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, American Civil Liberties Union

Here are the places to start getting educated about this ballot question that would forever change our state constitution go to and what it would do:

The peculiar history behind Marsy's Law, the victim rights referendum on the Pa. ballot – Article in the Pittsburgh City Paper: <https://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/the-peculiar-history-behind-marsys-law-the-victim-rights-referendum-on-the-pa-ballot/Content?oid=16048922>

Ballotpedia – This site provides a basic overview – provides the actual wording of the ballot question and more: [https://ballotpedia.org/Pennsylvania Marsy%27s Law Crime Victims Rights Amendment \(2019\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Pennsylvania_Marsy%27s_Law_Crime_Victims_Rights_Amendment_(2019))

ACLU Fact Sheet on Victim Rights constitutional amendments: <https://www.aclu.org/other/aclu-fact-sheet-proposed-victims-rights-amendment>

PA Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Position: https://www.pacdl.org/files/Marsy's%20Law_pacdl_final_3_26_2019.pdf

We're Victims' Rights Advocates, and We Opposed Marsy's Law – Article by Iowa Victim Advocates: <https://www.aclu.org/blog/criminal-law-reform/were-victims-rights-advocates-and-we-opposed-marsys-law>

Pennsylvania Judge to Rule Soon on Marsy's Law Referendum Vote Counting - Article from NBC 10 news can be found at: <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Marsys-Law-Ballot-Question-Pennsylvania-563712851.html>

Pennsylvania Good Government Group And A Voter File Lawsuit To Block "Logrolled" Constitutional Amendment – Press Release of Oct 11 2019: <https://www.palvw.org/news/press-release-pennsylvania-good-government-group-and-a-voter-file-lawsuit-to-block-logrolled-constitutional-amendment>

PA already robust system of Victim Rights: (making a constitutional amendment unnecessary – redundant and confusing)

Original victim rights legislation enacted Nov 1998 - amended and enhanced in 2002

You can read the PA Crime Victims law: <https://law.lclark.edu/live/files/4976-pennsylvania>

You can also get a look at the robust victim services already provided in PA on the PA governments website for crime victims (it is easier to understand than the actual law that is linked above): PA Crime Victims website - <https://pcv.pccd.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Does my Vote Really Count?

Yes it does. But before we get to that, did you know that Bucks County has had dismal turnout of voters of late. In the 2014 May primary, just 11% of Republicans and 20% percent of Democrats took part in voting. Those numbers are very disheartening indeed.

While many people get energized to go to the polls on election day during presidential elections, the elections in between, called mid-term elections, while far less attended to, are really no less important. Some may argue they are even more important as it is your local township, county, state and federal representatives and senators who make the most impact in your community and your daily life. It is the state and federal legislators who every day introduce bills and vote on bills that turn into the laws that we all must abide by.

The slate for this November 5th election includes Bucks County Commissioners, numerous judges

for local districts, county Court of Common Pleas judges, state judges and your local township leaders, schoolboard leaders etc.

Now back to our question, "Does My Vote Really Count?" Well here are some stories to get you thinking about races that were decided by some really small margins.

In the US presidential race of 2000 between Al Gore and George Bush, the state of Florida was considered a "swing" state. In the end, after much controversy and recounts, George Bush won the state by a margin of only 537 votes out of almost 6 million vote casted that day. I believe the folks in Florida think their vote counts.

Then there is the 1911 nail biting vote in California for women's voting rights. Early exit polls gave hope that the suffrage movement would succeed. However by 11 pm anti-suffragists were claiming victory and major California newspapers ran with headlines about the suffrage

amendment being "dead." But all the votes had not been counted. When the rural area votes starting coming in there was renewed hope for the suffrage movement.

In the end, a margin of just 3,587 votes out of 246,487 cast—or about one vote per each of the state's 3,121 precincts—made California the sixth equal-suffrage state, effectively doubling the number of women voters in the U.S

Or perhaps you will resonate with the story of the 1960 presidential election. John F. Kennedy's margin of victory over Nixon in 1960 was less than one vote per precinct.

Yes these are examples of elections long ago, but they are examples of something that's as true today as it was on those election days—individual efforts can make the difference between an exhilarating victory and a devastating defeat.

Most important to remember - your vote can't count unless you actually go to the polls.

Our quote to the right says it all . . .
"Every election is determined by the people who show up"

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election is
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**Larry J. Sabato,
Pendulum Swing**

Wherever you live you are not too far away from a CSP meeting.

Upper Bucks CSP Meetings

2nd Friday each month 10:30 AM - 12 PM
Penn Foundation—Univest Conf Room
807 Lawn Avenue, Sellersville, PA 18960

Central Bucks CSP Meetings

1st Wednesday every month 11AM-12:30PM
Lenape Valley Foundation
500 N. West Street, Doylestown, PA 18901

Lower Bucks CSP Meetings

2nd Thursday every month 3-5 PM
Penndel MH Center - Community Room
1517 Durham Rd, Penndel PA 19047



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