

ASSOCIATION NEWS: Columbus Metropolitan Club

Wednesday, August 12, NOON In-house audience and Livestreaming - YouTube

Racism: Where Do We Go From Here? Fighting Voter Suppression While Guaranteeing Fair Elections



Miller

“Our democracy is at its best and most functional when every citizen has an equal opportunity to have their voice heard.”
- Human Rights Campaign.

There’s a balancing act going on in Ohio and many other places in the country. The balance between partisan-driven attempts to suppress voters representing certain demographics, with the right and desire for every eligible voter to cast their ballot, while wrestling with outdated technology that can create unintended obstacles for voters.

For example, thousands of voters were erroneously targeted for removal last year under a system in which each of Ohio’s 88 county boards of elections handles its own voter-registration records. It’s a system that the state’s elections chief called “antiquated and inefficient.”

It’s time to reform that system, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said in an interview in which reporters for the USA TODAY Network and The Columbus Dispatch presented their most recent findings in an ongoing investigation of Ohio’s 2019 purges. He said he wants to bring it under state control and restore trust in the process.

“The system we have in place right now is prone to error — human error, vendor error,” LaRose said. “It’s unacceptably messy.”

In Ohio, what has become a routine purging of the state’s voter rolls exposed deep flaws last fall in the manner the list of eligible voters is maintained. Around 40,000 voters were set to be incorrectly disenfranchised after citizen volunteers matched names



Washington

with publicly available voter data.

According to Jen Miller, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters in Ohio, who spearheaded the volunteer effort, “there were massive errors. There were literally tens of thousands of Ohioans who should not be on the list. They did not qualify to be purged. They were active voters who were living and may not have even moved.” (New York Times, October 14, 2019)



Jackson

Moving into the presidential election of November 2020, the challenge of making elections open, fair and inclusive is complicated even more by the safety issues raised by the coronavirus pandemic, and an economy that is struggling. Arguments about the availability and legitimacy of mail in ballots and early voting add more layers of complexity.

What’s fair, what’s accurate, what is being done to modernize the system, and to prevent intentional partisan voter



LaRose

suppression? It’s a balancing act between a valid, credible election process and one that discourages or suppresses voter participation.

To discuss these complex issues at CMC, **Jen Miller**, Executive Director, League of Women Voters, Ohio; **Andre’ Washington**, Midwest Regional Representative & Ohio State President A Philip Randolph Institute; **Frank LaRose**, Secretary of State; with host **Curtis Jackson**, Anchor, Spectrum News 1.

From NBC4i’s website, July 31, 2020

In federal court, the League of Women Voters of Ohio, along with other organizations, filed a lawsuit challenging the current process of matching voting signatures on absentee ballots and ballot applications.

“We want to make sure that this process isn’t denying people who are truly registered Ohio voters,” said Jen Miller, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

Miller said the current process is not uniform and election officials who have no handwriting analysis experience are allowed to reject ballots if they think the voter’s signature doesn’t match. She also explained that voters with a disability and the elderly are most susceptible to being rejected and may need to vote absentee this year due to the pandemic.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose responded to the lawsuit in a statement:

“Ohio voters expect accessible and secure elections. This lawsuit is a solution in search of a problem that would obliterate Ohio’s safeguards on providing secure, no fault absentee voting to every eligible voter. As always, I’m open to working with these groups to improve Ohio’s processes and technologies related to signature verification, but a lawsuit 67 days before early voting begins is not the solution. Opening the floodgates to allow for potential voter fraud and abandoning this important and long-standing safeguard will only empower those seeking to delegitimize our

election. We won’t allow that to happen in Ohio.”

Also on Friday the Ohio Democratic Party filed a lawsuit to require Boards of Elections to accept absentee ballot applications via email.

“If we can do bank transactions online, if we can do other things online, we buy things online, there’s no reason in the world why you shouldn’t be able to apply for an absentee ballot online,” said David Pepper, chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party.

Pepper said the current law doesn’t prohibit the practice and more than 20 other states allow voters to email a request to receive an absentee ballot. Secretary LaRose’s office said there are concerns with the cyber security of requiring boards of elections to open attachments.

Secretary LaRose released the following statement on this lawsuit:

“Now more than ever, voters need stability and trust in their elections. Implementing an insecure system where e-mailed attachments could just as easily be a virus as it could be a picture of a ballot request form puts our election in danger. In just a few weeks, we are putting a ballot request form in the hands of every registered voter. That allows every voter to have their voice heard. The ODP should stop trying to score cheap political points and join me and Ohio’s bipartisan elections officials in pushing for secure online absentee ballot requests through SB 191.”

– Calendar of Events –

There is a reason why you do what you do and it is an important day in your life experience when at last you discover the reason. Self-knowledge is the beginning of self-correction.

August 7, Positive Thinking Every Day, Norman Vincent Peale

Upcoming Forums

Livestreaming

CMC invites in-house audiences for limited seating. Paid registration is required by the Monday before and we cannot accept walk-ins.

We will continue **livestreaming the forums at noon on Wednesday** and the popular **Archived Forums recommended with currently relevant content now available anytime** on YouTube.

The Livestreaming forums are FREE to view but we encourage you to **register to submit questions and to support CMC by purchasing a virtual seat!**

To show our appreciation, CMC invites people who purchase a virtual seat to a Zoom session to “Continue Meaningful Conversation” with a qualified discussion leader following the forum at 1:00 p.m.

WATCH your email for additions and updates.



James



Curtin



Marshall

Wednesday, August 19, NOON

Limited in-house audiences and Livestreaming

Racism: Where Do We Go From Here?

Policing in the Community:

Does the Past Dictate the Future?

Larry James, Managing Director, Crabbe Brown & James, Attorney for National FOP, **Mike Curtin**, retired journalist and Associate Publisher Emeritus, The Columbus Dispatch and former Representation, 17th District, Ohio House of Representatives, **Colleen Marshall**, co-anchor, NBC4.

Sponsored by Crabbe Brown & James

Recommended Archived Forums

Available anytime at your convenience on YouTube

“Police Body Cameras: Benefits and Challenges”

“ACLU President Susan Herman”

“John Dean: The Legacy of Watergate”

“Of Pundits, Press, and Politics: Election 2018”

Encore Forums: Job titles for all speakers represent the roles they were in when the forum was originally presented.

Anyone requesting additional information may contact the CMC staff at staff@columbusmetroclub.org or visit www.columbusmetroclub.org.

The CMC offices have moved! Please be sure to update our address to
1041 Dublin Road, Suite 103
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Wednesday, July 29 recap In-house audience and Livestreaming - YouTube

Racism: Where Do We Go From Here? Judicial Reform



Photos by Jane Scott

CMC Board Member Deb Hackathorn with moderator Carter Stewart, panelists Judge Laurel Beatty Blunt and Diane Menashe.

Featuring Diane Menashe, partner and director of litigation training and pro bono activities, Ice Miller, LLP and Laurel Beatty Blunt, judge, 10th District Court of Appeals, State of Ohio with host Carter Stewart, managing director, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, former presidentially-appointed U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Ohio.



Panelist Diane Menashe, Cathy Kurila, Sheryl Munson, Rena Passas and Mary Younger.



Laurel Beatty Blunt and her dad Otto Beatty connect at the CMC forum.



Lori Francescon and new member Napoleon Bell II talk with CMC lifetime member Janet Jackson.