

LWVPA Press Conference Continued

Once the League's case reached the state Supreme Court, it determined that the congressional districts violated the constitutional right of Pennsylvania voters to free and fair elections and it ordered the Legislature to submit a more balanced map.

When the Legislature refused to do that, the Supreme Court hired its own map maker to determine fairer districts. After the court adopted a map based on nonpartisan principles, such as contiguity, compactness and population, the voters elected a state delegation made up of nine Democrats and nine Republicans that reflected the makeup of the state's voters.

The misleading mailers, showed a map with two badly gerrymandered districts that were actually drawn by Republicans in 2011, not the Supreme Court in 2017, but claimed the court did it. The mailers are produced by a PAC named the Pennsylvania Leadership Fund and paid for by Yass, the state's richest person.

Because of its involvement in bringing the gerrymander lawsuit and the fact that the three justices, Christine Donavan, Kevin Dougherty and David Wecht, are running in a nonpartisan retention election, LWVPA felt compelled to call out the disinformation campaign.

Gobreski called it "disinformation and a deliberate abuse of the electoral system" while Widestrom said the campaign is a "false and deliberate misstatement of the court's constitutional role."

They said the Leadership fund should pull the mailers and apologize to the voters. The League is looking at other options it can pursue between now and the election but Widestrom noted that the organization does not have the resources available to Yass and other big money donors.

"But we do have a free press," she said.

She also pointed out that the League has many resources on its site, www.palwv.org that voters can use to find nonpartisan, accurate information so they can make up their own minds. The resources include videotaped interviews with the three supreme court justices and two appellate court justices running for reelection. See Links below.

LWVDC President Anne Mosakowski, and other local League presidents also addressed the disinformation campaign, noting that it is part of a pattern of political discourse that undermines the public trust.