

Northern Virginia Chapter Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy  
Notes from Chapter Meeting May 15, 2023

We had an information-packed meeting with 60 participants. The entire meeting was dedicated to voter engagement and the upcoming primaries in June and the general election in November. Two speakers, Chris de Rosa of the League of Women Voters and Robert Lester, Coordinator for Civic Engagement at VICPP, stressed the importance of this particular election, when all of the seats in the Delegate Assembly are up for election and redistricting has placed many voters in new districts.

Chris de Rosa: Redistricting and Implications  
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- **Positive Benefits**

There are no more closed doors in the re-districting process

The new maps resulted in compact districts that, for the most part, respected jurisdictional boundaries

The new maps ignored incumbent addresses, so some incumbents are running against each other; others are no longer running; and some moved to stay with their prior district.

The new process ended prison gerrymandering, the former practice that assigned incarcerated individuals to the location where they were incarcerated, as opposed to their home districts. This former practice affected resources assigned to what otherwise would be lower population districts. It was noted that incarcerated individuals are able to vote, if they have not been convicted of a felony. If convicted of a felony, once released they still have to apply for restoration of voting rights.

- **Implications for This Election Season**

There are all new districts with new lines, so many voters will be in a new district and may be assigned to new polling places.

Voters may be voting for new and unknown candidates. For example, current State Senator George Barker is running for election in a new senate district in which 93% of the voters are not his current constituents.

These changes make it critical that voters “know before they go” – their districts, their polling places, and the candidates who are running.

- **Useful Websites and Resources**

<https://virginiaredistricting.org> Provides background on redistricting and shows the new maps

<https://www.vote411.org> League of Women Voters website. Provides voting guide and candidate information and registration information

<https://www.vpap.org> Great all-purpose website to find general information on voting, where to vote, and who's running.

- **Ranked Choice Voting in Arlington County**

Chris also described the ranked choice voting process that is being used in limited local elections in Arlington for the primaries. She pointed out that the process enables a more diverse pool of candidates, requires that candidates be better able to “sell” themselves, because they may be second or third choice in a first round.

Robert Lester, Coordinator for Civic Engagement, VICPP  
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- **VICPP Voter Engagement Issue Focus**

Criminal Justice  
Health Equity  
Paid Sick Days  
Affordable Housing

- **Goals of Civic Engagement**

Ensure voter participation in primaries (June 20) and general election (November 7)  
For complete information on registration dates, early voting, absentee voting, and in-person voting go to <https://www.elections.virginia.gov>

- **Strategy for Civic Engagement**

Use a shared power model to come together as regional teams.  
Do regional training  
Focus on voter registration and Get Out the Vote  
Recruit congregations, with a goal of 300 congregations with 100% voter registration  
Host non-partisan candidate forums  
Meet with candidates after the primaries about VICPP priorities – non-partisan  
Send post cards to infrequent voters  
Targeted areas for increased voter participation: Loudoun County, Fauquier County, Prince William County, Manassas City, Manassas Park, Henrico, Goochland, Stafford, Fredricksburg, Spotsylvania

Important to remember that there are also School Board and other local elections that require attention and monitoring

#### Closing Comments from Anne Murphy

- Remember the importance of Learn, Pray, Act
- Know before you vote and reach out to your neighbors with information
- Current state and local incumbents will still be in office until the end of December 2023.
- Primaries are being held June 20, and in-person voting is already open
- Become familiar with VICPP positions. <https://www.virginiainterfaith.org>
- Sign up for VICPP weekly newsletter
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