



MEDC News

January 2021

Welcome to MEDC News!

Published monthly by the Murrysville Export Democratic Club.

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The Murrysville Export Democratic Club is open to all voters registered as Democrats and residing in Murrysville and Export. We meet on the third Tuesday every month – virtually on Zoom during these pandemic times. Membership is a great way to be involved with important elections and issues in our home community. For more information about who we are, see our website at murrysvilledemocrats.org. Navigate to the “Contact Us” to sign up for our emails.

MEDC dues are \$20.00 a year. Get more information to become a member with an email to murrysvilledemocrats@gmail.com and **SUBJECT: MEMBERSHIP.**

Thank You to Essential Workers

We continue to live through a great pandemic that has killed more than 400,000 Americans, including many hundreds in Westmoreland County. In addition to lives lost, lives have been disrupted in major ways. Through all of this, many of our neighbors and others who serve our communities have placed their own lives in special danger as they have provided us vital services.

MEDC and our members salute and are grateful to those who have continued work on our behalf as health care workers; our police, fire and emergency responders; our teachers and school staff; and those who have maintained other public services.

A New Beginning – Desperately Needed National Leadership

The nightmare is over and a new administration is in charge in Washington DC!

After the vast majority of America’s voters rejected a second term for Donald Trump, he spent more than 75 days since the November 3 election whining, sulking, and trying to find a way to subvert the will of more than 80 million voters, even attacking many of his closest allies who dared tell him that he really did lose the election. During this time, Donald Trump was silent about the growing COVID pandemic crisis and about Russia hacking the cyber systems of America’s businesses and government agencies. Instead, he selfishly worked to undermine public confidence in our election system and the foundations of our democracy.

After failing at the ballot box, failing with recounts, and failing in more than 50 court cases at the local, state, and Supreme Court levels, he resorted to inciting a mob that attacked the U.S. Capitol, disrupted a joint session of Congress, and threatened lawmakers and Vice-President Pence.

He leaves office being disgraceful and disgraced, attacking even many of his long-time allies and supporters, and still trying to subvert his successor.

Congratulations to President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris! We have already seen a leadership tone that emphasizes decency and unity, welcoming supporters and adversaries to work together on behalf of this country. We see new leaders who will speak the truth about the seriousness of the pandemic and who will set an example for the personal conduct we should all mirror to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities from a virus that kills indiscriminately.

We are looking forward to other changes on many levels. A president who tells the truth. One who will respect the role of the media – even when he is criticized. A president who shows us how we should treat one another with respect. An administration that supports expanding health care as a fundamental right, rather than taking health insurance away from millions. A Secretary of Education who actually supports public education. Cabinet officials who will act to protect America's natural resources and the rights of workers and consumers. An administration that restores America's role as a respected global leader on matters of health, environment, economy, human rights, and security.

U.S. Representative Guy Reschenthaler Betrays Us

Our Representative in Congress, Guy Reschenthaler, in December joined with some other Republican members of Congress to support a lawsuit filed by the Attorney General of Texas to ask the U.S. Supreme Court to throw out the Pennsylvania election results! Is Guy planning to move to Texas? Why would he support a lawsuit that even Republican strategists and attorneys said had no basis and no chance, but sought to invalidate the votes cast here in Murrysville and Export? What a classic case of disrespect for the voters from whom he was willing to accept support for his own re-election. Of course, the Supreme Court quickly and summarily dismissed the case brought by him and the Attorney General of Texas.

But decisions by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and U.S. Supreme Court were not enough for our "Representative". On January 6, even after the Trump mob attacked the Capitol, Guy joined more than 100 other Republicans in the U.S. House to vote to not accept the results of the Pennsylvania election for Joe Biden.

We need to remember this the next time this Guy asks us for a vote.

New Session Begins for Pennsylvania Legislature

The Pennsylvania General Assembly began the 2021-2022 session with a swearing-in ceremony on January 5. Our member of the House is State Representative Robert Brooks who lives in Murrysville and State Senator Joe Pittman who lives in Indiana.

Although both are members of the Republican majority in their respective chambers, both have maintained a relatively low-level legislative profile in the past. Simply adding one's name to co-sponsor bills written by others, or adding one's name to weekly news releases prepared by others, isn't the kind of leadership we need.

In coming months we'll be watching to see what our lawmakers do to assure access to COVID testing and vaccinations for all Pennsylvanians who need them; to enable our local businesses and communities to successfully emerge from the current crippling pandemic; to address the statewide and southwest PA skilled worker shortage that is an impediment to economic growth; to provide a funding base to maintain our roads and support vital public transportation; to have the state pay a fair share of school costs to relieve the burden on local property tax payers; and to have the state improve support for higher education in order to reduce our "highest in the nation" public college tuition rates and the resultant very high student debt.

We're also waiting for our legislators to have meaningful town meetings - either in person when possible later or virtually for the time-being - to listen to constituents, report to us, and answer our questions.

2021-2022 State Budget Debate Begins in February

Governor Thomas Wolf will deliver his proposed 2021-2022 state budget to a joint session of the General Assembly on Tuesday, February 2. It will kick off a budget debate that is supposed to be concluded by June 30. Almost immediately following the Governor's budget message, the state House and Senate both typically adjourn for a three- or four-week break while the Appropriations Committees conduct public hearings.

Next month we'll report on what is in the Governor's proposed budget. If you are interested, you should be able to watch the Governor's presentation live or as a recording by going to [Governor's Office \(pa.gov\)](https://www.governor.pa.gov). The House and Senate web pages at [PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](https://www.pahouse.gov) also usually have links for watching. You can usually view the Appropriations hearings on the same House and Senate links and on PCN channel [PCNTV - Pennsylvania's Network](https://www.pcntv.com) on cable.

There are always many controversial issues in any budget proposal, and tough decisions to be made by lawmakers. It is up to all of us to pay attention and to make our voices heard to our legislators.

School Board and Municipal Elections in 2021

The next election is not far off - Tuesday, May 18 - when the ballot will include local offices including municipal officials and members of the Franklin Regional School Board. Once again, all registered voters will be able to vote by mail-in ballot or in-person at the poll on election day.

The last day to register and be able to vote in the May Primary Election is May 3. The last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot is May 11.

Mail-in Ballots in Westmoreland County in Fall 2000

Millions of Pennsylvania voters and many thousands in Westmoreland County opted to vote by mail in the 2020 General Election. It went pretty well, except...

Here in Westmoreland County, some voters applied for a mail-in ballot, and received notice their application was received, and later received notice that their ballot was mailed to them ... but the ballot never came. Despite repeated assurances the ballot would arrive before election day, those ballots never arrived. Not even now more than two months later! Fortunately, as far as we can tell, most voters persisted and went to the Courthouse in Greensburg before election day and voted there, or voted with provisional ballots at the polls on election day.

But what happened? Our county commissioners owe voters and taxpayers an explanation. The county contracted with an Ohio firm to process our ballot applications. Our county commissioners preside over a county election office that lost its director before the election and then lost many of the staff. This needs to be fixed before the Primary Election in May.

Support Our Local Food Banks

Yes, we have food insecurity among children and families right here in our own communities. The demands on food banks across the country, including the Westmoreland County Food Bank and food pantries run by local organizations here, is greater than ever seen before. This goes for the local Meals on Wheels programs, too. It includes the efforts by our school district – sometimes individual teachers – to ensure that students have the nutritional support they need to be successful learners.

MEDC encourages all of our readers to be aware of help where it is available, and to consider a donation to any of these organizations if you can. In particular, MEDC is supporting a fundraising effort to support the Backpacks-To-Go Program in the Franklin Regional School District.

M-EDC Elects Officers

Congratulations to the team elected recently as officers for MEDC for the next twelve months.

President – Michelle Milan-McFall

Vice-President – Ravi Balu

Secretary – Debbie Watt

Treasurer – Jeremy Davidson

SIGN-UP FOR MEDC NEWSLETTER

If you received this newsletter from a friend, but wish to be added to the MEDC mailing list to receive the newsletter directly, please send email to

*murrysvilledemocrats@gmail.com with your **name** and **email address** and **Subject: MEDC Newsletter Request**.*