

March for Science 2018
Saturday, April 14, 2018
League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad
President's Speech

A century ago, women marched to win the right to vote.

53 years ago, hundreds of nonviolent demonstrators marched across the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama to demand the right to vote for black citizens.

In January of 2017 and again in 2018, American women and their supporters around the world marched to advocate for legislation and policies regarding human rights and many other issues.

Last month, the youth of our nation marched for stricter gun control.

The first amendment protects our right to 'peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances'.

Marching is a protected tradition in the United States of America.

Today, we march to hold our elected and appointed officials responsible for enacting equitable, evidence-based policies that serve all communities for the common good.

The League of Women Voters exists to enhance the democratic rights of all citizens. We have a long history of marching in unity with other groups to protest any curtailment of these rights and in support of progressive improvements in society.

Today, we march for science. We march in support of the incorporation of scientific knowledge in the decision-making processes of our society and its political systems and institutions.

There are important decisions to be made about the future of our society:

We need to create a health care system for all of our citizens that is built on medical, psychological, and sociological scientific knowledge about how to live healthy lives and how a healthy citizenry benefits all of us.

We have important decisions to make about how to improve our agricultural techniques and promote healthier eating patterns that require the use of scientifically obtained knowledge.

We have important decisions to make about how to improve our environment, clean water supply, and land use that require scientifically derived knowledge.

We have important decisions to make about how we educate our children to become sophisticated and responsible voting citizens that must come from scientifically derived knowledge about how humans learn, reason critically, and make decisions.

We have important decisions to make about how we relate to one another in a just and respectful manner that require scientifically derived notions of ethics, justice, and sensitivity to the perspectives of others.

The number and complexity of these decisions will grow with the future as will the scientific knowledge relevant in making them.

For too long we have made our political and societal decisions based on outdated laws and the intuitions of politicians and bureaucrats.

Our country was founded by people who were very familiar with the science, philosophy, and critical reasoning knowledge of the late 18th Century.

The U.S. Constitution was designed with a separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers so as to avoid having one individual - or a small group of wealthy individuals - in control of our society and our institutions.

The U.S. Constitution was designed to be a living, growing system that would take advantage of anticipated advancements in our scientifically derived knowledge.

So, today, let us remember that the founders of the United States of America were scientifically knowledgeable, critical thinkers, who were very familiar with the best knowledge of their day.

The good news is - although public trust in many institutions is deteriorating in the U.S. - public trust in science, though it varies by demographics, has been relatively high and stable.

Let us march today to bring science and critical reasoning back to the decision-making in our society and banish the self-serving rhetoric that appeals to intuition and habits of thought promulgated by those who manipulate the media.

Although marching and speaking out can bring attention to matters that require change,- if you don't vote,

- if you leave the voting up to someone else,

- if you think the election is going to go the way you want it to go without your vote,

- if you think by marching, by speaking out, - you've done your part, - think again.

If you think your vote doesn't count, - and if you don't vote,

- the only thing that doesn't count - is YOU.

-If you want things to change, you MUST vote.

The League has made available three online resources where you can find everything you need to know - about the upcoming primary election. They are - www.vote411.org, www.votersurvivalkit.org, and Greensboro.com - the News & Record digital edition.

For Vote 411, we have post cards available at the Voter Registration tents that show you how to log on. It even has a QR code.

Voter Survival Kit - which should go live on Monday - is our own, locally created and produced site which contains election information for 4 counties.

At Greensboro.com, to find Guilford County candidate profiles, click on news, select "elections" from the drop-down menu and then click on Candidate profiles.

Election Day is May 8. Early voting starts next Thursday, April 19. You can find the early voting schedule on Vote411 and on your county's Board of Elections website.

So - cast your ballot - in *every* election -- for those candidates who support science -- to ensure scientific knowledge, critical reasoning, and a focus on understanding our contribution -- and our responsibility -- to the future of the world, - once again become the foundation of our society!

Thank you.