

A SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY **BERGEN INDIVISIBLE for DEMOCRACY** IN COOPERATION WITH **ACLU New Jersey**

**PROTECTING & EXPANDING**  
  
**VOTING RIGHTS**

  
 Featuring Guest Speaker  
 Jeanne LoCicero,  
 Deputy Legal Director, ACLU-NJ

  
 Followed by a Q & A session  
 moderated by Lori Sackler,  
 BID President & Founder

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019 - 7:30 to 9:30pm**  
 McCandless Rm, Tenafly Municipal Center, 100 Riveredge Rd, Tenafly, NJ

July 5, 2019

Dear Fab BID Friends and Members,

I just want to take a moment to thank all of you who attended our highly successful forum on voting rights in cooperation with ACLU-NJ on June 5th. The event featured Jeanne LoCicero, Legal Director of the New Jersey chapter of the American Civil Liberty Union. Over fifty people attended. It was a night filled with thoughtful insights and updates by Jeanne and intelligent discussion and debate based on informed questions from the audience.

The main challenges that voting rights face now are:

- \* Practices that limit access to polling places for the elderly and disabled, students and people of color (no nearby voting sites, English-only ballots, no disability access, etc.)
- \* Restrictive voter registration rules
- \* Inappropriate purges of voting rolls
- \* Prevalence of gerrymandering and other biased redistricting practices

Defending voting rights has become more challenging since a 2013 Supreme Court decision removing some essential components of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The possible addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 census could also seriously compromise equitable political and budgetary representation. We are still waiting to see how the most recent Supreme Court decision denying the addition of the question to the census plays out. However, its important to remember why the lower court decision was a "no" on adding the question.

*The presiding Judge Furman concluded that if the census form asks everyone to state their citizen status, that non-citizens and Hispanics will not fill out the form. Lawyers fighting the census question argue the approach will benefit Republicans and non-Hispanic whites as it goes against our constitutional*

*requirement to" count each person in our country-whether citizen or non-citizen..." - -*

**Joanne recommended that New Jersey residents:**

- \* support measures that allow early voting access and registration at the polls on election day**
- \* support legislation restoring the right to vote for felons who have served their sentences, even, if they are currently on parole or probation.**
- \* All of these changes are supported by Governor Murphy, but need to be enacted by the state legislature. BID members and allies can support these changes by contacting their legislators.**
- \* Citizens can also contact the ACLU hot line with any issues they think should be addressed. Typically, it is the public that keeps them alerted to events and issues that arise.**

**Regarding additional BID activities, Bergen Indivisible for Democracy (BID) is currently engaging with a group of individuals who are pursuing upgrading voting machines in Bergen County to more reliable technology. If anyone is interested in working on this particular initiative, please reach out and we can connect you to the grass root group who is spearheading the effort.**

**And, our recent visit to the Bergen County Jail - - an update**

Given the recent decision to allow detainees in the Bergen County Jail to have physical contact with visitors, we feel the pressure that we applied through our visit to the Bergen County Jail and follow up (along with the pressure from First Friends and other groups), is definitely making a difference. We will be requesting further improvements to their situation including funds to connect with legal counsel for representation so stay tuned.

**Finally, we are thrilled to report that our October 29th event, Hate Has No Place, is taking shape.** The Kaplen JCC on the Palisades will be co-hosting with us and we have already co-sponsorship from the National Council of Jewish Women and the Anti Defamation League (ADL.) The Regional Director of the ADL, Evan Bernstein, will moderate a panel, which will include Rabbi David Kirshner of Temple Emanuel and Jared Maples, the New Jersey Director of Homeland Security.

You will not want to miss this important event so mark your calendars!

In the meantime, we will be taking some time off for the summer to rest and recharge. We have a sub committee who will be working over the summer to tie

down the details for the October event, but we will not be having any major meetings. The steering committee is already planning to have a robust set of election actions for 2020 which is probably going to be the most important election cycle of our lifetimes. Please be ready to get on board as you did in 2018 with post card writing, phone calling and canvassing.

Will be in touch! Have a wonderful summer!!

Warm regards,  
Lori Sackler,  
BID President