



Invitation to CWI Zoom Meeting, Tuesday October 27, 2020 (12:00-1:30 PM Eastern)

You must register in advance for this meeting – go to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvdOivpjiE9LImRm0GXD0VuPbbIJAZt8>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The Electoral College: Perils and Possibilities for the 2020 Presidential Election

CWI's program for the October 27th virtual meeting, "*The Electoral College: Perils and Possibilities for the 2020 Presidential Election*" will provide information on the Electoral College, its history, current practice, and future possibilities. Contrary to what many assume and what we have witnessed in past elections it is not the popular vote but the votes cast by the Electoral College that elects the President of the United States. A speaker from the Brennan Center (TBD) will explain the legal underpinnings of the Electoral College and how States determine their Electoral College votes. Pam Wilmot from Common Cause will provide information on how The National Popular Vote Compact would make the country's popular vote determine the Presidential election outcome. Ronnie Pawelko from The Alliance for Justice will discuss other concerns relating to the Electoral College system and provide a reminder of the rules for 501 (c) (3) and 501 (c) (4) organizations advocacy during and after elections and provide examples of activities that may and may not be engaged in. The meeting is organized by CWI's Vice President for Legal Affairs, **Jeanette Lim Esbrook**.

Pam Wilmot is Vice President of State Operations for Common Cause where she oversees a nationwide network of 30 state offices and advisory boards. She has added this responsibility to her longstanding work as Massachusetts Common Cause Executive Director. She is an expert on the electoral college, campaign finances, ethics, elections and transparency laws. She also is the Director of the National Popular Vote initiative to ensure the winner of the popular vote receives 270 Electoral Votes and becomes president through the National Popular Vote Compact. She has a J.D. from Northeastern University, a Masters in social work from Smith College and a Bachelor's degree from Brown University. She received the John Gardner Public Service Award in 2017.

Ronnie Pawelko is Senior Counsel for the Bolder Advocacy program at Alliance for Justice and is based in AFJ's Washington, DC office. Through trainings and technical assistance, she provides nonprofit advocacy organizations and foundations with accessible information, resources, and information so organizations can safely navigate complex laws and rules as they pursue systems change. Ronnie received her J.D. from Albany Law School and her B.A. from Russell Sage College. Before joining AFJ, Ronnie was General Counsel at Family Planning Advocates of New York State. Previously, Ronnie served as Health and Human Services Team Counsel for the New York State Senate and as staff attorney for the MergerWatch Project.

Next CWI Zoom Meeting: Noon Tue. Nov 17, 2020. How Election Results Influence Priorities for Women's Issues in Health, Education, Justice, Governance and more

SUMMARY OF 9-22-20 CWI MEETING ON: GET OUT THE VOTE STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE HIGH AND DIVERSE VOTER TURNOUT

The meeting started with tributes to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) from CWI Vice President Legal Affairs, **Jeanette Lim Esbrook** and CWI Treasurer, **Holly Joseph**.

Summary of **Jeanette's** Tribute to RBG:



On September 19, 2020, the day after RBG died, Jeanette took flowers to pay her respect and express profound sadness. RBG, as a Civil Rights lawyer, was especially meaningful to her. At the Supreme Court, Jeanette saw many flowers, signs and people, especially children - little girls who were expressing their respect. RBG died on Rosh Hashanah. The Jewish belief is a person who dies on Rosh Hashanah, the start of the Jewish New Year, is a person of "Great Righteousness," a "TZADDIK" so appropriate for Ruth Bader Ginsburg. (See photo of Jeanette honoring RBG at the Supreme Court.)

- RBG used brilliant litigation strategies to advance protections against sex discrimination. She tactically selected cases of gender discrimination against women by showing the impact on men in order to educate male judges about sex discrimination. In *Frontiero v. Richardson* (1973) Sharon Frontiero was a U.S. Air Force pilot and was denied housing and medical benefits for her husband. These benefits were automatically given to wives of

the Air Force servicemen. RBG represented Sharon Frontiero before the Supreme Court and won. In *Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld* (1975) Social Security benefits of their deceased husbands were available for widows while caring for minor children but not available for similarly situated widowers caring for minor children. RBG won this case before the Supreme Court. Before becoming a Justice of the Court, she argued six cases before SCOTUS and won five.

When compared to Thurgood Marshall for her brilliance in case selection strategy, RBG said, "My life was never in danger." She knew that Thurgood Marshall stood with his clients across the South and faced dangers. "He put his life on the line," she said, "something I have never done." She gained courage and inspiration from Marshall's example. Like him, she understood it was necessary to educate her audience of decision-makers about discrimination.

Jeanette's own legal work was related to RBG's work on integrating all male public colleges. In June, 1996, RBG delivered the 7-1 Virginia Military Institute (VMI) opinion. Clarence Thomas's son was a VMI student, and the Justice recused himself. Antonin Scalia dissented. In her majority opinion, RBG stated that VMI failed to show an "exceedingly persuasive justification" for limiting this education opportunity to men only. VMI was supported by public funds from all citizens: men, women and people of all races and ethnicities. These military educational institutions prepared "citizen-soldiers" for leadership in civilian life as well as military service sometimes exposing students to challenging approaches. VMI argued that this type of education was not suitable for men and women together and proposed to establish a "separate but equal" institution for women only. In both Virginia and South Carolina, a graduate of VMI and the Citadel became a member of an influential network of men who were often elected to public office or serve on boards of companies and powerful institutions. The graduates wore their rings proudly which gave them instantaneous recognition as a

member of this powerful elite. The provision of a separate but equal institution for women was not an equivalent opportunity given the history and long standing reputation of these schools and their networks. RBG stated that this educational opportunity should not be denied women based on stereotypical presumptions about interests and abilities and that some men may find this type of education unsuitable. VMI had to admit women.

Jeanette said, “On June 26, 1996, I and three other Department of Justice attorneys were in the Eastern District Court of Judge C. Weston Houck to begin The Citadel trial. Judge Houck announced from the Bench that the Supreme Court had just ruled that VMI had to admit women, and because of that ruling, he ordered that the attorneys representing the U.S. and attorneys representing the Citadel were relieved from presenting their case. He ordered us to develop an “Assimilation Plan” to immediately admit women to the Citadel. It took nearly a year to do that. The graduation ring was a topic of discussion under the Assimilation Plan, and I voiced concern that the women cadets upon graduation would be awarded a smaller version, one that had been designed for mothers, sweethearts and wives of graduating male cadets. My colleagues thought it was not important and asked me to step down on the issue which I reluctantly did. But on the final day in May, 1997, when the Court accepted the Assimilation Plan, Judge Houck surprised us all when he stated that he had one final concern, and that was the ring. He understood its importance and ordered that women graduates would receive the same size ring as the male cadet graduates. I felt it was my private victory.”

Holly Joseph said she remembered seeing RBG and Scalia in discussion where he said, “What’s not to like about her?” RBG’s motto was “Fight for things you care about but lead others to join you.” May her memory do it in a way that will lead a revolution and full compliance with her dying wish not to select a new Supreme Court Justice until after the new President is inaugurated.

Megan Corrado, Esq. CWI Secretary and VP Global Issues introduced and moderated the panel on [Get Out the Vote Strategies](#).

Christine Chen, Executive Director of the Asian and Pacific Islander Vote ([APIAVote](#)), said that there was high motivation for all Asian Americans to get out the vote and that many were still persuadable. In the past there has been little information on how various Asian American populations vote. But APIAVote has conducted this research as shown in these [Slides](#) on its website.



Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the U.S. and had a record high turnout in the 2018 midterm elections. They will be especially important in competitive states and Congressional districts especially NV, NC, GA, TX, FL, PA, MI, southern CA and NJ. Asian Americans are the only racial group that is majority immigrant, and there are as many Asian American immigrant voters as Latinx voters. Despite significant diversity in socioeconomic status, the various Asian American population groups have similar views about inclusion, the social safety net, and economic justice.

The September 15, 2020, “2020 Asian American Voter Survey” was conducted online and by phone from July 15-Sept. 10, 2020. It included a national sample of Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese registered voters. Most subgroups except for Vietnamese favor Biden over Trump by nearly 2:1 ratio. Indian Americans are strongest on Democratic preferences. The Vietnamese are the only group favoring Trump. For Party Identification, 27 to 54% identify as Democrat; 28 to 41% as independent, and 16 to 38% as

Republican. The issues of health care, education and racial discrimination are top concerns favoring Democrats, but on the economy Republicans are slightly favored. Asian Americans are progressive on issues such as immigration, racial justice, gun control and environmental protections. Compared to other communities, the Asian American community is contacted less by campaigns. There seems to be more support for the Democratic candidates in the House, Senate, and for President except for the Vietnamese who have more conservative and anti-Communist views. Younger generations in all groups are most progressive. Here is another great survey: Mighty Voices: Asian American and Pacific Islander Women Voters in 2020, <https://www.napawf.org/our-work/content/2020/8/26/mighty-voices> . This National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum survey shows the importance of reproductive rights to Asian Pacific Women. Poll workers are needed: <https://www.powerthepolls.org/?source=APIAVote>

Janice Mathis, Esq. Executive Director of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. ([NCNW](#)) discussed how the COVID 19 pandemic is deepening division and complicating civic engagement.



We tend to focus on the Presidential race in general elections, but we must also consider how pending litigation, control of the Senate, as well as state races will influence national policy and budgetary priorities. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) could disappear in the middle of the pandemic as the result of legal challenges in the Supreme Court. It can be overwhelming to keep hope burning so you feel motivated. There is disparate maternal health care, underlying conditions that make COVID more fatal to African Americans. The intersection of every pandemic seems to run through the African American community along with Latinos and people who have to be out of their homes and work. Only about 1 in 5 African americans can work at home. That is the lowest percentage of any group.

Many of their jobs are manual and require lots of physical stamina – ambulance drivers, fighting fires. This is taking out pillars of the community that one would normally turn to in times of need to stabilize. Therefore, we must get closer not to some type of oligarchy but rather to democracy that allows for equal protection for everyone and not just a fortunate few. priorities are conflicting with each other.

The rules for US voting are so arbitrary. Jimmy Carter, who monitors elections worldwide, famously said that he can not do so in the USA because there is no central authority nor standard rules of operation or law. We see the weakness in federal leadership seemingly incapable of formulating a comprehensive plan to stem the pandemic. Who should say? Governors? The President? State/Local officials? Who should take responsibility? This is revealing how much we took for granted. Norms is not quite the adequate word for what we are describing for this period in time. Norms function like laws except they do not need to be prosecuted, tried, they are just understood. It takes a while for people to catch up with how to carry on in a new system such as increased voting by mail which is needed now during the pandemic.

We put a lot of focus on young people. The other night NCNW had [“Adulting 101”](#) – what it means to be an adult citizen, with Angela Rye, rapper YELLOWPAIN, presidents of Wilberforce and Cheyney, two HBCUs founded in the 19th century, Dr. Cole, and more, because only 25% of people under 25 years old vote, which is a lower rate of participation than anyplace in Western Europe. This is unacceptable because the consequences of failed policies fall most heavily upon young people. Youth tend to be more often in trouble with the law or regulatory issues and makes them a target. It takes a while to grow up and realize how to make oneself less of a target, such as by voting. Voting is basic, it should be like brushing your teeth, exercising, drinking water, and

other self-care. We put a lot of energy into trying to get people to vote and training them to be poll workers and monitors. It is likely we may have resistance so people have to know what their basic rights are.

Questions to Mathis and other presenters:

Volunteer opportunities? [NCNW.org](https://www.ncnw.org) – click on [DONATE button for COVID relief](#). Also, there is a need for phone banking and people to encourage people to fill out the [Census](#). The [NCNW national convention](#) is this week.

Considering COVID, how are APIA and NCNW, et al, doing outreach to colleges these days since most schools are online, etc., and historically often somewhat difficult to get to vote?

Mathis answered: Via the Internet- by social media. That is the preferred method by the digital natives, and the message has to be authentic and beautiful.

Chen answered: They have an ambassador program and trainings and they continue to train folks to be their own messengers. A lot has shifted to social media and since many people are at home, they are encouraging intergenerational conversations and influencing, for example between grandchildren and grandparents.

Is the low rate of contact from various political parties due to not being involved in online mailings and site searches? What would you identify as the challenge?

Chen answered: Making the campaigns understand the importance of the Asian American electorate for the particular state/area they are focusing on, ensuring they are doing this early on, and not only the last 4 weeks of a campaign because we have seen that those who develop the relationship and engage early on yield much more if they do so correctly. She gave the example of Nevada and Virginia with changing demographics and local candidates starting to tap into the Asian American voter more, and later the presidential candidates doing so as well.



Alice Cohan and **Eleanor Smeal**, Political Director and President of the [Feminist Majority](#) and [the Feminist Majority Foundation](#). Alice pointed out that to advance women’s rights we need to flip the Senate and prevent the confirmation of a conservative Supreme Court Justice before the inauguration of a President in Jan. 2021. To work toward these goals Feminist Majority and NOW have created a PAC, “Vote for Equality”, which focuses on college students of whom only 40% have traditionally voted. It is working to mobilize the student vote with 88 schools in 7 key states (AZ, IA, KA, NC, SC, ME and MT) where they can flip U.S. Senate seats and elect pro-ERA, pro-



choice, pro-democracy Democrats. It currently involves 800 students who work online with virtual platforms, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to get out the vote and provide local information on voter registration and changes in election laws and knowing their election rights.

The PAC also works on defeating anti-abortion referendums in Louisiana and Colorado. The Colorado referendum targets Dr. Norm Hearn who is one of the few providers of late term abortions in the nation.

Students are an important target group because of the current confusion on campuses due to how different campuses are coping with Covid -19 and because of students' deep concern about issues such as climate change, equality, immigration, and more. Of course, much attention should be given to supporting the ACA and the ERA. Many may not be aware that the third largest health insurer is in KY, home of Mitch McConnell. A key focus should be on winning in the Electoral College as well as an overwhelming popular vote. Help by donating to www.voteforequality.us.

Our next CWI meeting on Oct. 27 will focus on the Electoral College and how it might be manipulated.

Coming DC Area and National Feminist Events and Resources

Please send your upcoming feminist events to post in CWI newsletters to president@womensclearinghouse.org. LIKE and FOLLOW us on CWI's Facebook www.facebook.com/womensclearinghouse and Twitter www.twitter.com/CWINews pages! Also SUBSCRIBE and LIKE our video sponsor & provider

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Hanburycross>. Times are Eastern. Paid-up CWI members will receive additional forwarded email messages on additional feminist meetings and activities.

To join the National Women's Political Caucus VA chapter, contact katihornung@gmail.com or jane.newell@comcast.net, or visit NWPC.org/membership.

Maryland Women's History Podcast Releases Second Season

Ballot & Beyond is produced by Preservation Maryland.

Ballot & Beyond is a multi-media public history exhibit and podcast highlighting the work of remarkable Maryland women with a focus on the state's suffragists and activists. More than 55 episodes are available now for streaming and reading on: ballotandbeyond.org.

Tune in to episodes of Ms. magazine podcasts, On the issues with Michele Goodwin on

[Podcasts + Spotify](#).

Events:

Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020, 11:30-1PM "Confronting Racism In and Through the Arts with Molly Smith from Arena Stage, Womans National Democratic Club. [Register](#)

Friday, Oct. 16 11AM -7PM Title IX, MeToo, & Administrative Law: Responding to Backlash, & Looking to the Future. Information & Registration [Click Here to Join](#)

Friday, Oct. 16 , 1PM Equality Now, AAUW DC Branch [Register](#)

Sat. Oct. 17, 2020. 2nd part of Feminist Majority and National Organization for Women National Virtual Conference Free but for information [Register](#).

Sat. Oct. 17, 2020. Women's March in DC and other locations. DC 11 AM start at Freedom Plaza [RSVP](#)

Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020 10 AM-11:30 AM WEBCAST: Women Transforming Peace: Celebrating 20 Years of UNSCR 1325 and Beyond. US institute of Peace &RSVP <https://www.usip.org/events/women-transforming-peace>

Thursday, Oct. 22, 2020 6PM-7:30PM, The Segregation Pandemic: Brown as Treatment or Placebo? American Educational Research Association Brown Lecture [Register](#)

Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020 Noon CWI zoom Meeting The Electoral College: Perils and Possibilities for the 2020 Presidential Election, Registration <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvdOivpjiiE9LImRm0GXDs0VuPbbIJAZt8>

Tuesday Nov. 3, 2020 Presidential Election.

Sat. Nov. 7, 2020-Virtual NOW Conference, Women, Money and Power Plenary Session and Workshops. [Information and Registration](#)

CWI's newsletter is endowed by friends in loving memory of our previous longtime editor, Roslyn Kaiser

Meeting summary by Feminist Majority Foundation Board members: Jeanette Lim Esbrook, Janice Mathis, Sue Klein and Sherry Klein.

Newsletter edited by Sue Klein

CWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS, JULY 2018 – JUNE 2020

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Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues Membership Form

<https://womensclearinghouse.org/>

The CWI membership year is: **July 1-June 30**. Multi-year and Gift memberships are encouraged and discounted! Please fill in beginning and end years (e.g. 2020-2023 for a 3-yr membership). Members will receive CWI newsletters and meeting announcements as well as other feminist news and event notifications. Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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	Individual	Organization	Young Adult (< 30 yrs. old)	Virtual (outside DC area)
One-year	\$25	\$40	\$15/yr.	\$20/yr.
Two-year	\$45	\$70	Gift Membership (insert information in individual or organization membership)	
Three-year	\$65	\$100		

Membership Dues Amount: _____
Tax deductible donation: _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED = _____
Date of Payment _____

- Mail form & check to Connie Cordovilla, Membership Chair, CWI, 7439 Patterson Rd., Falls Church, VA 22043-1332; or
- Pay through PayPal, by selecting the desired membership option on our website’s membership page <https://womensclearinghouse.org/membership/> & please send this form by mail to the above address or email it to MembershipChair@womensclearinghouse.org; or
- Bring a check, payable to CWI, and this completed form to a CWI meeting. (Form Revised: 10/13/20)