

Making Sense out of the New Congressional Districts & Basic Voting Information for You

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In my recent travels I have spoken with several lawmakers and/or staff people who mentioned that their office phones were ringing off the hook on the days before and the day of the March 13th, special election in District #18 to fill the seat vacated by US Congressman Tim Murphy.

They were bombarded by all types of questions. People asked why their polling places were closed, or why weren't they permitted to vote when they went to a District #18 polling place, or they wanted to know where they could vote.

It was confusion times ten. Some of it was due to the over-the-top national attention and headlines commanded by the District #18 Saccone/Lamb race; people thought that everyone in PA could vote in that race. Only registered voters in the former District #18 were permitted to vote. Some of the confusion was due to the PA's new US congressional district map drawn by the PA Supreme Court. What was once District #18 on January 1st, 2018, is no longer District # 18 today. Many, if not all, of the US congressional districts in PA now cover a different geographic footprint. Some of the confusion was due to the sheer number of retirements among elected officials and the multitude of candidates running for offices. Find the answers to these basic questions and you will be armed with information and ready to vote on May 15, primary election day in PA.

- Who is my state representative in Harrisburg?
- Who is my state senator in Harrisburg?
- Who is my US Representatives in Washington, D.C.?
- Who are my US Senators in Washington, D.C.?
- How, when and where do I register to vote?
- What is my new US congressional district?

The links below help you identify your current state and federal lawmakers, lists important voter registration and voting dates, tells you how to register online, how to locate your new US congressional district and how to find the candidates for the May 15th primary.

SMC will identify resources where you can learn more about the candidates for May 15th as we get closer to the date.

VOTING BASICS 101

If you are not registered to vote go to the PA Department of State website link below to complete the online application. You must register by April 16th to vote on May 15th.

<http://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/Pages/default.aspx>

To determine your PA state representative and senator go to the PA General Assembly website, scroll down the left-hand side and fill in your address to bring up the information. Make a note of the district numbers of your PA state representatives and senators. Caution: *the site has not been updated with new US Congressional districts as of 3/25/2018 so ignore those.*

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>

To locate your new US Congressional district, go here and you will see the old 2011 map, the new 2018 map and a list of counties with updated district numbers. Find your county and make a note of your new US Congressional district number.

<http://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/CandidatesCommittees/RunningforOffice/Pages/Petition-Notice.aspx#districtmaps>

To find the candidate database for the May 15th primary, go to the PA Department of State home page and click on the large box on the left.

<http://www.dos.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Once on the candidate database – it is huge – click on the print button (don't print it!) and it will bring up an excel sheet. There are columns for candidates listed for federal and state primaries and they are organized by their new district number, municipalities, and counties.

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/ElectionInfo/electioninfo.aspx>

To see a list of important voter registration, absentee ballot and election dates go here.

<http://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/CandidatesCommittees/RunningforOffice/Documents/2018importantdates.pdf>

Share this information with your employees. If you have any questions call me at 412-342-1606 or email EileenAnderson@smc.org.