



Robert C. Byrd Center
for CONGRESSIONAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION

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Byrd Center Partners with League of Women Voters to Host Two-Event Series on Electoral College and Ranked Choice Voting.

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education is partnering with the League of Women Voters of Jefferson County to host two virtual events in a series entitled “How Representative is our Democracy?” The events will take place live on Zoom on Thursday, February 25, 2021 and Wednesday, March 10, 2021, each at 7:00 pm.

How representative is our democracy? Coming out of the historic 2020 election, many people are examining the United States' electoral system more closely than ever, leading us to consider whether our present systems for voting and electing public servants are truly representative of the will of the people.

In the first event on Thursday, February 25, 2021, Neal Barkus, President of Conservation West Virginia, Inc., and author of the blog *Panhandle Progressive*, and Dr. Ray Smock, Byrd Center Interim Director and former Historian of the United States House of Representatives, will discuss the history of the Electoral College, the existing framework for our national elections spelled out in the Constitution. Barkus and Smock, each having studied and written about the Electoral College, will reflect on the shortcomings of this system in representing the will of American voters historically and contemporarily, setting the stage for the discussion of election reform which will be featured in our second event in the series.

The second event on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 will feature Dr. Mark Brewer, Professor of Political Science at the University of Maine who will discuss ranked choice voting, an election reform method that is being implemented in states across the nation. Brewer has written extensively about political behavior and institutions, examining the impact of partisanship on the electoral process. His scholarship and experiences in Maine where ranked choice voting was implemented for the first time during last November's election will offer attendees a first-hand perspective of how this election reform can impact the voting process and its outcomes.

Both events will be conducted via Zoom and offer attendees the opportunity to ask questions of our speakers. You must RSVP in order to receive the Zoom link to join the events live, which you can do by visiting byrdcenter.org/how-representative-is-our-democracy. Visit this link to access resources from our speakers and introductory information to ranked choice voting. You may also RSVP by calling the Byrd Center's office at (304) 876-5648.

The Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education is a private, nonpartisan, and nonprofit educational organization located on the campus of Shepherd University. Its mission is to advance representative democracy by promoting a better understanding of the United States Congress and the Constitution through programs and research that engage citizens.

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