

Panel Discussion - How to Be an Informed Voter in the Post-Truth Era

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHERE: Joel D. Valdez Library, 101 N. Stone Ave., Tucson, AZ 85701

WHEN: 9:30-11:45 AM, Saturday, September 15, 2018.

FREE and OPEN to the PUBLIC: Event is accessed from library's free underground parking. Light refreshments will be served.

CONTACT: Rex Graham, LWVGT, azsocialjustice@gmail.com, 858-232-2706

MEDIA AVAILABILITY: One-on-one interviews with the speakers immediately after the program at 11:45 a.m.

For American Democracy to reflect the will of voters, truth matters. However, voters eager to learn about the important events of the day are routinely confronted with misinformation. The Post-Truth Era began years ago. It has coincided with increased political polarization, a decline of trust in science, and shrinkage of traditional news media outlets. The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson has assembled a panel of local academic and journalism experts to discuss the differences between fact and fiction and what steps voters can take to better determine if something is true or false.

SPEAKERS

Kate Kenski, Associate Professor of Communications, U. of Arizona.

Disinformation campaigns--from those focused on climate science to those directed at undermining the credibility of news media--have become commonplace. Understanding disinformation techniques and tactics may help to prepare voters to identify it, but several cognitive biases prevalent in all humans make the task difficult to tackle the magnitude of this problem at an individual level.

Chris Weber, Associate Professor of Government & Public Policy, U. of Arizona.

The psychological and social science features of the Post-Truth Era involved foster tribal allegiance, erosion of critical thinking, low voter turnout and strong emotions like fear, anger, exhaustion, and alienation.

Dylan Smith, Editor and Publisher, TucsonSentinel.com.

Trust in traditionally trustworthy civic institutions — the press, scientific, community and government organizations — has been systematically attacked, even as many of those groups have ossified. But individuals can play a role in rebuilding the social capital of sources they rely on, and encouraging the development of new ones.

Jill Jorden Spitz, Editor, Arizona Daily Star.

The 2018 elections, like all elections, are based on the premise that voters are guardians of American Democracy. However, in a post-truth era, neither passion nor reasoning will help us make voting decisions that reflect our real interests. We all must distinguish between fact and fake and rely on facts.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.