

Newsletter

William Paterson Society of Professional Journalists

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Edition 02



Journalism Tip



Election Day is coming soon! As a journalist, it's important to remain as neutral as possible. When writing a news story during or after the election, you must not include your opinions, just the facts! According to the "Handbook for Journalists During Elections," opinions should be expressed in the privacy of the voting station, like any other citizen, not in your articles.

Meet Anuz Thapa

Join WPSJP in welcoming Anuz Thapa, Video Producer at TheStreet. Thapa is a multimedia journalist based in New York City who has experience in both domestic and international issues. He regularly contributes stories of immigrants living in the US for Voices of New York, an online publication. He has also freelanced for TheRealDeal.com producing regular and Virtual Reality 360 video stories. Thapa completed his Master's degree in International Reporting from CUNY Graduate School of Journalism in 2017. A complete multimedia journalist, he worked as a news anchor and program producer for News 24 television, a leading television news channel in Nepal, for 5 years, covering political and social issues.

November 3 at 6 p.m.
Zoom ID: 9825595368

WPSJP Memory



Anthony Baamonde, WPSJP Vice President

"My favorite WPSJP memory was the Reality Check with MLB writer Bryan Hoch. I was able to spend some time with him after the event and his best advice to me was 'don't stop writing.' As someone who wants to get into sports journalism, it was inspiring to meet someone who was not only in the industry, but a genuinely nice guy. I'll never forget that event and the words of wisdom he gave me."

Voting Matters— A Discussion with Mitch Gross, Political Science Undergraduate, of the Political Science Club

By Olivia Biel, *President Emeritus*

The 2020 Election has enflamed already existing voting myths, anxiety and despair about the election process. The flood of competing opinions and misinformation on social media feeds have many thinking that their vote doesn't matter, driving them to stay clear of anything political.

This mentality puts our democracy in danger. It's based on a misunderstanding about the way the government— both at a state and federal level— works. To help our readers understand the importance of not only voting, but of being actively involved in local politics, I talked to Mitch Gross of William Paterson's Political Science Club. Mitch Gross is working towards his undergraduate degree in political science, and currently holds an undergraduate degree in film production from NYU.

DOES MY VOTE COUNT?

Yes! Gross says a big mistake that people make is only paying attention to the top the ballot— the presidential race. However, legislative districts are also voting for their senators, house representatives and local politicians.

"There are a lot of reasons to vote having nothing to do with the president," Gross said.

Check if you're registered to vote: voter.svrs.nj.gov/registration-check

While many decide to ignore local politics and focus on the federal level of government, local politicians are not going to ignore you. They are actively writing, sponsoring and voting on new legislation that, whether you pay attention or not, will affect your life. That's why it's important not only to vote but to practice what Gross calls "political hygiene."

Practice political hygiene by doing the following:

- Pay attention to the activity of politicians. What bills are they writing and sponsoring? What legislation have they voted for and what have they voted against?
- Visit candidates' campaign websites. How do they describe their stance on certain issues? Is it a generic statement carefully crafted to appeal to all parts of the political spectrum? Or is the candidate straightforward about their values? Do the specific steps legislators need to take in order to achieve their campaign goals?
- Organize. Find a group of people, or organize one, that feels strongly about a specific social, economic, environmental or other issue, and form a voting bloc. Let your local legislators know how you feel about bills going up for a vote; do you want them to vote for or against a bill? How does their stance affect who you vote for in elections?
- For a quick, organized way to see what potential candidates are doing in their respective legislature, go to congress.gov. For profiles on candidates and more election information, Gross also recommends ballotpedia.org.

THE BACK OF THE BALLOT

In addition for voting for members of your federal and local government, the 2020 election ballot will also ask New Jersey voters for their stance on three different issues: the legalization of recreational marijuana, the delaying of the redistricting schedule amid census data delays caused by COVID-19, and tax exemptions for peacetime veterans.

These votes, which come in the form of "yes or no" questions, help New Jersey politicians gauge the public's opinion on these issues. The answers will be critical in guiding their decisions on determining whether or not related legislation is passed.