

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/09/17/league-of-women-voters-forum-asbury-timothy-kneeland-andrea-cain-george-moses-voting/32559595/>

## Forum asks: Why don't we vote?



David Riley, @rilzd 3:45 p.m. EDT September 17, 2015



(Photo: SHAWN DOWD, staff photographer)

[Meager turnout](#) in last week's primary election left voting advocates wondering why so few people exercise their right to vote, and how to get more citizens to the polls.

The League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metropolitan Area will seek answers at a public forum at 7 p.m. Monday at Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Ave.

Nazareth College professor Timothy Kneeland will lead a discussion with George Moses, director of North East Area Development, and Andrea Cain, vice president for programs and interim CEO of Community Place.

Kneeland said he also wants questions from the audience.

The talk will explore voter turnout in general, as well as in parts of the city where it has been particularly low, said Virginia Busack, who sits on the board of directors for the nonpartisan league, which focuses on educating and mobilizing voters.

“We need to understand why people aren’t voting,” she said. “This is one of our basic, inalienable rights — one vote, one person. It’s just unbelievable that we don’t understand how fortunate we are.”

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Virginia Busack, League of Women Voters

Busack said she also wants to hear ideas about how to get people excited about voting.

Roughly one in 10 eligible voters turned out for last Thursday's primary an hour before polls closed.

Kneeland, Nazareth's history and political science chairman and director of the Center for Public History, said low-income citizens are less likely to vote. So are younger, single people, as well as African-American and Hispanic citizens, he said.

Part of the problem may be that politicians tend to target issues important to people who already vote, not others who feel disenfranchised, according to Kneeland.

"If you drill down, people say, 'I don’t see a difference between the two major parties, or I don’t think my vote matters because things don’t change. The wealthy are still in power and none of this affects my life,'" he said.

There are many ideas about how to make it easier for people to register and get to the polls, including online and same-day registration, Kneeland said.

To register for Monday's forum, visit [lwv-rma.org](http://lwv-rma.org).

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