

# League of Women Voters of NYS

## STATE VOTER

April 2019

*Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*



### From the State President

As we all listen to maybe way-too-much chatter about the Mueller Report, we can be grateful for the way it is refreshing everyone's awareness of **the fundamental importance of our voting system in our democracy**. In New York the new election law reforms mean that we are hyper-focused on both halves of our League mission statement, "**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**" We hope all local Leagues are taking advantage of this opportunity to remind their communities that we are here and are needed as much as we ever have been. Toss in climate change and the stakes have never been higher.

Happily we were just awarded a **\$25,000 grant from LWVUS to help us educate our NY voters about the new laws**. As you learn more about the specifics of what LWVNY will be doing, be sure your local League is fully prepared to take advantage of the opportunities you'll have to connect to local voters. My League works every fall with its library system and town supervisors organization to distribute Voters Guides. What other groups are helping you? What new ways of publicizing your work can we all come up with?

More immediately, I alert you that the **Pre-Convention Kit** is on its way to you and there is a lot of information for you to absorb there. Share with others and set aside time yourself to get up to speed even if you can't attend the convention. **However, after you read about some of the speakers and other aspects of the convention, we hope you will do whatever you can to be there in person!** The mix of **new AND experienced** members is especially important, so look around at your next League meeting and make sure that those who will add to - or get the most out of - the experience will be there. It comes 'round only every two years and we really want you there with us.

Dare Thompson, President  
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### Mother's Day Tributes

As a tribute to the special women in your life, [click here to make a tax deductible donation to the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation](#) for Mother's Day by **May 1, 2019**. This gift may be made in honor of your mother, sister, friend or any woman who has impacted your life. In recognition of your gift of \$25 or more (by May 1), we will send a personalized card to the person you designate and let her know you honored her with a Mother's Day contribution to the Education Foundation. **Perhaps you would make \$100 donation in honor of 100 years of the League!**

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**Advocacy Training Day in Albany - April 30 - Cancelled**

We're sorry to report that our annual **Advocacy Training Day in Albany has been canceled** for this year. We still encourage any members to come to Albany during the legislative session to meet with your legislators. We'll help you with updated info on what to lobby, but it's also just a good chance to go meet your legislator in person.

Advocacy Training will be available at the State Convention so join us there to learn more! (Jennifer is coming back to lead this training!)

### Welcome Colleen to the State Office Staff

Colleen Geary has joined the League of Women Voters New York State Office as the Annual Fund Manager. She is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross. She began a career in fundraising at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. Her experiences in marketing /fundraising continued as the Director of Admissions at the Academy of the Holy Names and Donor Relations Specialist at the College of Saint Rose both in Albany, New York.

# State Convention is Coming!

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS** fighting  
of New York State **for democracy**

\*\*\*\*\*  
**100 YEARS STRONG**

The League's state Convention is scheduled for June 7-9, 2019, at the Hilton in downtown Albany.

The Pre Convention Kit is now available [here](#). In this Kit is the information you need to be an educated voter at Convention: Proposed 2019-20 Budget, Proposed Bylaw Amendments, Proposed 2019-2021 Program Planning, and Nominating Committee report for the 2019-2021 LWVNYS Officers and Board of Directors. There is also information about our fantastic speakers and training workshops, as well as updated list of workshops on League matters and information session on what other local Leagues are accomplishing. There is something at Convention for everyone to learn - new members and long-time members! **Bring this kit with you to Convention - you will need it during discussions at plenary sessions.** If you're not attending Convention, read the Kit and tell your delegates how you want them to vote. We are a membership organization and need your input.

Click [here](#) to see the full **Registration Kit**. And, click [here](#) to register online. If **you** are interested in representing your local League at the state Convention, contact your local League President now. **You** can also attend as an observer - just to see what happens, network with others, and attend workshops and presentations.

## Awards

Now is the time for you all to think about the spectacular things you've done in the **past 2 years** and tell us about them! **We want to honor your great achievements!** Don't be shy - boast and share with us! [Click here](#) for the full packet for the awards - read them over, complete the form and send it back to us with newspapers clippings, photos, etc to showcase your great work! We need all the submissions **by April 30** so we have time to evaluate and select the winners. Talk with your board, committees, and members to see what you'd like to highlight (you can submit to more than one category!). We can't wait to read what you've done.

## Volunteers Needed at Convention

Delegates can volunteer at times other than plenary session and volunteers for plenary can observe plenary session. Volunteers may also sit in on workshops and other events, excluding meals, without paying. Unfortunately, the meals are expensive so they would have to register and pay to attend a meal event. Volunteers are usually booked for a 2 hour slot, but we'll take whatever time people can give us. Please email Britt Westergard, Chair of the Volunteer Committee ([brittlwv@gmail.com](mailto:brittlwv@gmail.com)), with names and contact info for anyone willing to volunteer. We can't have a successful convention without our volunteers!

## FEATURED SPEAKERS (more details in registration kit)



### "Civil Discourse: How Can We Achieve That Today?"

Friday, June 7, 6:30 pm

Robert Boatright, PhD, Director of Research, National Institute of Civil Discourse and Professor and Chair, Political Science Department, Clark University



### "Action Civics: A 21st Century Approach to Educating Youth for Democratic Participation"

Saturday, June 8, 12 noon

DeNora Getachew, Executive Director, Generation Citizen



### "The Woman's Hour Has Struck: Winning the Vote"

Saturday, June 8, 5:30 pm

Elaine Weiss, Journalist and Author

Co-sponsored by NYS Archives Partnership Trust

## WORKSHOP AND TRAINING SPEAKERS (more details in registration



### "The 2020 Census: Is There a Role for the League?"

Friday, June 7

Jeff H. Behler, Regional Director, US Census Bureau

[kit](#))



### "How to Make the League More Diverse and Inclusive?"

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training for All Attendees

Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9

Greg Owens, DEI Trainer

## OTHER WORKSHOP TOPICS (see registration kit for details)

Election Laws

Civics and Engaging Youth

LWVNYS Policy on No Empty Chair Candidate Forums

Fundraising Tips

Proposed Concurrence on Election Process

Tackling Food Waste and Food Insecurity

Advocacy Training

Fact or Fake: Exploring the Role of Media in Politics

Reviving Civility

Vote 411 Training

Youth Programs of Local Leagues

Moderating Candidate Forums

League Management Options

Social Media, Websites and Other Technology

Parliamentary Procedures and Plenary Session Discussions

Voter Services Q&A

2019-2020 Proposed Budget

Proposed New Program Process and Bylaw Amendments

Women's Suffrage and League History Projects

**Join us in Albany to celebrate, learn and meet new friends!**

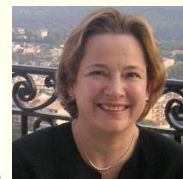
## **Advocacy**

**Sally Robinson, [sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com)**

### **Lobby Day for Medical Aid in Dying Act**

**Tuesday, May 14, 2019**

The annual Spring Lobby Day to urge lawmakers to make New York the next state to authorize medical aid in dying for terminally ill adults is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14. Our campaign (Compassion and Choices NY) to authorize the Medical Aid in Dying Act has built support among doctors and seen new co sponsors added to the bill weekly, but we've also lost some powerful advocates who died without this option. On May 14 we'll be standing with bill sponsors, physicians, clergy leaders, and affected families to send a message that dying New Yorkers have no time to waste, they need expanded end-of-life options to terminally ill New Yorkers. On that day, we'll be scheduling meetings with lawmakers, and hosting a press conference. We'll need all of our supporters and allied organizations to stand with us. For more information, [click here](#).



This is *your* chance to tell New York lawmakers why they need to take action to ensure that terminally ill adults have the ability to end needless suffering at the end of life.

- What: Rally and press conference in support of New York's Medical Aid in Dying Act
- Where: NY State Capitol (*Meet in Hearing Room C in the Legislative Office Building*)

- When: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 10:00 AM
- How: RSVP by emailing: [ny@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:ny@compassionandchoices.org)

### **LWVNYS Joins Other State Leagues on Great Lakes Compact**

(More info at <https://www.protectourgreatlakes.org/pledge>)

The Great Lakes Compact, signed into federal law in 2008, is a historic agreement developed to protect the Great Lakes by regulating how its waters are used and managed. According to the agreement, the waters of the Great Lakes must stay within the Great Lakes Basin and must be managed to meet the needs of all citizens who live there. The Compact allows for only a few narrowly defined exceptions to the ban on diverting water outside the Basin. Diversion applications that do not meet the Compact's strict criteria for exceptions to the ban cannot be approved. Failure to enforce the Great Lakes Compact by allowing unlawful diversions will jeopardize the integrity of this important legislation and the Great Lakes.

Core Principles of Compact:

- As a concerned citizen of the Great Lakes region, I take seriously my responsibility to protect our shared natural resources. Therefore, I pledge my public support for the following core principles of the Great Lakes Compact:
- Great Lakes water must not be sent outside the Basin except in very limited circumstances.
- Exceptions to the ban on diversions shall be limited to those that meet all criteria in the legislation, including that the water be used primarily for the benefit of residential households.
- All Great Lakes states will enforce the Compact using a consistent standard to review proposed diversions and other uses of Great Lakes water.

### **LWVNYS Joins LWVUS on Amicus Brief on Litigation Concerning Citizenship Question on Census**

LWVUS announced that they joined the "civic organizations" amicus brief for the Census litigation case in NY. LWVNYS is a party to this lawsuit so the signing on has the effect of all LWV Leagues being represented in this important case. If you're interested in reading the [amicus brief it is posted on the LWVUS website here](#). If you have questions about the brief, please reach out to Celina Stewart, Director of Advocacy and Litigation, [cstewart@lwv.org](mailto:cstewart@lwv.org).

## **Voter Services**

**Judie Gorenstein, [JudieL728@aol.com](mailto:JudieL728@aol.com)**



The League applauded the election reforms that were passed this January. We were pleased that money was included in the budget for early voting which is mandated to take place before the November 5, 2019, general election. However, we are very aware that in all but the smallest counties in NY where there will only need to be one early voting poll site, the county Board of Elections face many challenges to get early voting implemented and the election run smoothly.

Many of our local leagues have either met or spoken with their county Board of Elections about how early voting will be implemented in their counties. To allay some confusion and concern, here are some facts:

The paper poll books traditionally used in NY on Election Day, where poll workers locate the name of the voter and the voter signs, cannot be used effectively in the many counties where there will be more than one Early Voting poll site. There would need to be multiple copies of the books available at each and every poll site. Electronic poll books that will continuously be updated with who has already voted as well as on-demand printers to print the appropriate ballot for each voter will meet the needs of early voting. Electronic poll books and on-demand printers have successfully been used in other states that have early voting. People who vote early will have their votes counted on Election Day (unlike absentee votes that are counted after being checked with names of those who voted on Election Day) make it imperative that the poll books have accurate records of who already voted. Electronic poll books do just that. People from so many election districts may be going to same poll site for early voting, making it almost impossible for the poll site to have the printed ballots for every election district. On-demand printers linked to the electronic poll book can print out the specific ballot for each voter. This eliminates counties needing to print thousands of extra ballots ahead of time and confusion of locating the correct ballot for each voter. Counties where there is only one early poll site

can choose to continue to use the paper poll book used in the past and there is no need for them to have on-demand printers.

During the meetings of local Leagues with their county Board of Elections officials, some also heard that the counties are considering the possible purchase of new voting equipment prior to the general election. Some members have shared concern that the standards and criteria NYS Board of Elections (NYS BOE) established and followed when replacing our lever machines under HAVA, as well as the process for certifying machines, will not be followed.

It is important to note that early voting does not necessitate that counties purchase new voting systems. Some facts from the past are:

- NY was the last state at that time to replace the lever machines.
- NY has some of the strictest standards in certifying voting machines.
- The machines certified and used in 2018 election were:
- ES&S (Election Systems and Software) DS200 optical scan and their AutoMARK ballot Marking Device.
- Dominion Voting Systems: Image Cast Precinct or Image Cast Central Optical Scan, and their ImageCast Precinct Ballot Marking Device.
- The majority of counties, other than NYC and Nassau County, are using the Dominion systems. In some counties, there is no optical scanner used as ballots are counted by hand.
- Only Village of Portchester, because they are under federal injunction and have cumulative voting, has been authorized to use a different machine.

Some counties are looking to change their voting systems because they are over ten years old and may need to be replaced and also because there is new technology that combines printing the ballot with voting and scanning. There are new all-in-one voting systems being looked at and tested by NYS, but NYS BOE is not allowing counties to get waivers to purchase uncertified machines.

In the past the League had successfully lobbied for voting systems that are Secure, Accurate, Recountable and Accessible (SARA). In addition this year LWVUS is adding Transparent to the criteria. League members can and are urged to continue speaking with their county BOEs, not only making them aware of our criteria and that we are in contact with NYS BOE, but also that we will do what we can to help early voting run smoothly.

### **Challenges county BOEs are facing**

- Most counties will need electronic poll books and printers that can print ballots on demand. In addition, many are looking at some new upgraded voting systems which can include a printer. NYS BOE has not indicated which they are recommending or which machines are certified.
- Although money is now included in the budget for early voting and electronic poll books, counties do not know the amount they will be getting or even how the money in the budget will be divided. While the NYS BOE has supervisory power over the administration of early voting, the Governor's office controls the money. The Governor's office will determine each county BOE's allocation based on proposals submitted. The League is meeting with the Governor's staff and our coalition partners to have input into the criteria used to evaluate the proposals submitted by the counties.
- The counties have until May 1 to let the state know where their early poll sites will be. The minimum number of sites they need is designated by the new election law, with the maximum mandate of 7. However, the larger counties have indicated they will have more than 7 sites. Because the sites must be open for the two weekends prior to Election Day and the 5 weekdays in between, some are having problems locating sites.
- The increased number of days increases the challenge of finding poll workers and educating them.
- It appears that the individual counties also need to determine if during early voting, the voters can go to any early voting site in the county or if they need to go to a designated early voting site.



## Challenges for LWV

- The law mandates that early voting takes place beginning October 26, 2019, which is only a little more than six months.
- There is a lack of material to educate voters. Even the NYS BOE webpage does not include any information on the new election law reforms. The state League has just received a grant to provide education to the public on these new procedures. Watch for more details.
- Our members and Leagues need to continue to reach out to our BOEs and let them know of our willingness to help.
- We need to follow what is happening at the NYS BOE and advocate for high standards to be maintained.
- LWVNY, as well as local Leagues, needs to disseminate factual information in a timely manner to keep all our members informed.
- Leagues need to make sure material on their websites is accurate and updated.

## Youth Programs

Betty Ann King, [bettyannking4@gmail.com](mailto:bettyannking4@gmail.com)



Happy spring, everyone! It is the time of sunshine, green grass, and beautiful flowers bursting through with beauty and energy! The same can be said of our Youth Programs taking place, be it established programs with a new look, spin offs, or new programs entirely.

Your State Board Youth Committee is ready to help you find resources for developing program ideas and to assist you in providing help with getting your program posted on State website.

Once again here are the names and contact information for the State League Youth Committee members:

Margie Macintosh, Cattaraugus/Allegany League, [reelitteer@roadrunner.com](mailto:reelitteer@roadrunner.com)

Judie Gorenstein, Rivertowns League, [judiel728@aol.com](mailto:judiel728@aol.com)

Mary Jenkins, NYCity League, [mjenkins50@gmail.com](mailto:mjenkins50@gmail.com)

Ruth Goldberg, White Plains League, [henruhen@gmail.com](mailto:henruhen@gmail.com)

Betty Ann King, North Country, [bettyannking4@gmail.com](mailto:bettyannking4@gmail.com)

Betsy Metz, North Country, [bmetz1108@gmail.com](mailto:bmetz1108@gmail.com)

Crystal Joseph, NY City League, [crystal.y.joseph@gmail.com](mailto:crystal.y.joseph@gmail.com)

## From LWVUS - Policy Briefings

LWVUS will hold a series of **policy briefings** throughout Spring of 2019. The briefings will cover ongoing legislative and litigation efforts. Briefings will be offered on April 23, May 21, and June 11, and they will cover HR4 (the *Voting Rights Advancement Act*), HR1 (the *For The People Act*), and include a legislative and legal fiscal year wrap-up in June. The briefings will also be taped and archived on the US League Management Site. Please [visit the League Management Site](#) to sign up for the individual webinars. Space is limited, so RSVP soon!

## Local League News

Plans are well on their way by the **LWV of Syracuse** for a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters in New York State. The celebration is tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2019 and all have agreed to a cocktail reception with a guest speaker or historical impersonator.

At the annual meeting of the **LWV of Scarsdale**, Cynthia Deitle who has devoted her career to civil rights enforcement and outreach, will speak. She is a lawyer, a former FBI Special Agent and a former Civil Rights Chief for the FBI. Currently, Deitle works as the Program and Operations Director for the Matthew Shepard Foundation, a group devoted to advocacy and education on issues of tolerance

*Climate Wise Gardening: an EarthKeeping Fair* is being scheduled by the **LWV of Tompkins County**. This event will feature all you need to do to create healthy soils, gardens and landscapes.

Over 30 groups participating with exhibits and demos on soils, plants, and ecological gardening practices that protect the earth and capture carbon. Plant sales, tree and shrub giveaway, free soil pH testing, and more.

At their annual meeting, **LWV of Chautauqua**, will view the video *Among the Hemlocks Fantastic Stories From Fredonia, New York*. Mayor Rosas and Mayor Landis will speak.

The Local Government Committee of the **LWV of Buffalo/Niagara** organized a program on Gentrification: Exploring Solutions. The keynote speaker was J. Rosie Tighe, PhD, associate professor of urban policy and planning at Cleveland State University. Her work focuses on affordable housing, social justice and equitable development as she seeks ways to bridge the gap between research and practice. The following panelists added insights and perspectives as we considered what solutions from other areas might work here: Veronica Hemphill-Nichols, founder of the Fruit Belt McCarley Gardens Housing Task Force; Sam Magavern, executive director of the Partnership for the Public Good; Dennis Penman, Penman Development Partners; and, via Skype, Marimba Milliones, president & CEO of Hill Community Development Corporation in Pittsburgh, PA.

Two sessions for training moderators of candidate forums were held by the **LWV of Westchester ILO** in April.

**LWV Steuben** sponsors monthly issues forums to spotlight issues that might not otherwise come to the attention of local citizens. The series, titled Finding Voice, has a goal to offer people a way to have a say in a safe and courteous environment. Each Finding Voice program includes a feature presentation and an open mic session.

**LWV of Suffolk County** has an updated 2019 Directory of Public Officials! It's posted online - visit the LWVSC website (esp if you haven't recently) at <http://www.lwv-suffolkcounty.org/> or link directly to the DPO on the website at [http://www.lwv-suffolkcounty.org/files/2019DPO\\_web\\_4-1-19.pdf](http://www.lwv-suffolkcounty.org/files/2019DPO_web_4-1-19.pdf)

**LWV of Schenectady** has organized a viewing of the film titled "*Now Is The Time*" and will also hear from speakers: Dr. George Jolly, area Internist, and member of the Physicians For A National Health Program, and Ms. Karen Wojck-Hess, President of the Capital Region Alliance for Retired Americans

*The Electoral College: Pros and Cons* was the topic at a recent meeting of the **LWV of Cortland County**. Professor Mary McGuire of SUNY Cortland presented the history as well as benefits and drawbacks of the Electoral College. Professor McGuire teaches in the Political Science Department at the College and is also Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences.

**LWV of Albany County** is a proud sponsor of *Down to Earth: Practical Actions You Can Take to Heal Our Planet* that will help the public take action in their home and community to heal our planet.

**LWV of Huntington** sponsored a Student Day at the Legislature on March 12, 2019. About 30 students from local high schools attended a day at Suffolk County Legislature in Hauppauge. A panel of four Legislators discussed their career paths and what it's really like to be a Legislator. This was followed by a presentation by Lt. Anthony Calandrillo of SCPD on school safety and the issue of having a School Officer Safety Force throughout Suffolk County. Then the students broke into two groups and participated in a session with the Legislators, followed by a Legislative Mock Debate on the school safety issue. Students played the role of the Legislators and others represented community members stating their opinions and objections on the issue.

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