



League of Women Voters of NYS **STATE VOTER**

February 2019

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.



From the State President

We're putting the final touches on the state Convention schedule and there's a great line-up of speakers and workshops. It's always a joy to see a lot of first-time Convention goers there, so we've planned topics to appeal to both the seasoned and the new League member. A good convention needs lots of both, so please talk it up and bring others!

Whatever your interest, there'll be plenty choose from. You'll get updates on NY's new election laws and on VOTE411, tips on moderating candidate forums, and advice on making sure the 2020 census counts everyone. You'll also get League management guidance on everything from engaging new members to using social media and other communication tools better.

You'll be able to watch a film about food waste, talk about "What's Hot on the Hill" and how to be an effective advocate, and swap stories about what we're all doing to engage young people in their government - including our new civics lesson plans. And of course you'll be given a refresher on parliamentary procedures and opportunities to discuss the state budget and by-laws changes and other state League business.

The above doesn't even cover the speakers who will include one on the great political divide and how to bridge it and Elaine Weiss with her book on winning the vote, *The Woman's Hour*, that was such a hit at the last LWVUS Convention. (I waited in line for about an hour to get my own signed copy!)

And running through the whole event will be opportunities to think about how we can make the League more inclusive. The NY Times recently had a widely shared story about racism in the suffrage movement that reminds us how much we are all shaped in our actions and beliefs by the culture of our time. [Click here to read the article](#). How much are we still doing this and in what ways? What do we need to do to open up our work to everyone? What questions will our great grandchildren raise about US?

Dare Thompson, President
League of Women Voters of NYS
darethompson@gmail.com; Tel:518-465-4162
Facebook: League of Women Voters of NYS
Twitter: @LWVNYS

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Travel with the League



Click [here](#) for trips and itineraries.

Advocacy Training Day in Albany - April 30

Sign up NOW for Advocacy Training on April 30 in Albany!

We will discuss the current legislation and help you lobby your state legislators in Albany. Come meet your NEW legislators, too! They need to hear from you.

[Click here](#) for registration form or [click here to register online](#). If we don't have enough people, we may have to cancel - so sign up now!

NY Counts 2020 Lobby Day

Sign-up for New York Counts 2020 Lobby Day: March 5th

The League recently became a coalition partner with New York Counts 2020, a broad-based, statewide coalition composed of racial, ethnic, immigrant, religious, health, education, labor, housing, social services, and business groups working in partnership with state & local government officials,

to ensure that New Yorkers across the state - particularly marginalized communities in hard-to-count districts - can fully maximize participation in the 2020 Census.

On March 5th, New York Counts 2020 will hold a lobby day in Albany in support of funding for educational efforts surrounding the census question. You can learn more about New York Counts 2020 [here](#) and sign up for their lobby day [here](#).

State Convention is Coming!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of New York State
fighting for democracy

100 YEARS STRONG

The League's state Convention is scheduled for **June 7-9, 2019, at the Hilton in downtown Albany**. We will be sending out more information and details as soon as we can - the registration packets will be mailed in the next week. 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.

Civics: DemocracyReadyNY

Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org



Democracy Ready NY Coalition
The League is pleased to be a partner in the Democracy Ready NY coalition. A press release on the coalition was distributed last week.

The DemocracyReady NY Coalition, a new statewide group working to secure the right of all New York students to a quality P-12 education that prepares them for effective civic participation, announced its launch today, a day when many are reflecting on the past, present, and future of our democracy.

The coalition of educational-justice organizations, civic-education leaders, and good-government advocates was forged by the Center for Educational Equity at Teachers College, Columbia University, following a year of consultation with stakeholder groups and leaders from across the state. DemocracyReady NY will help guide New York's legislature and education policymakers as they advance their education priorities for the 2019 legislative session and beyond....

DemocracyReady NY promotes the right of all New York students to develop the knowledge, skills, experiences, and dispositions needed to become effective civic participants. The Coalition will raise awareness of students' right to effective civic preparation under the New York State constitution, and work to strengthen state education law, policy, practice, and resources to guarantee that right in every school in the state.

Voter Services

Judie Gorenstein, Judie1728@aol.com



It is more important than ever for Leagues to develop good working relationships with their county board of elections!

After having lobbied for election law reform for so many years, the LWVNY was extremely pleased when the legislators passed and Governor Cuomo signed the bills into law, including early voting which will take place for the first time before the general election on Nov. 5. However, as of now this is an unfunded mandate. As the governor did not include money for it in his addendum to the budget, it is up to the NY Senate and Assembly to include it in the budget. Whether money is included (it is estimated that \$25,000,000 is needed to cover the cost which includes purchase of electronic poll books hiring of additional poll workers, training of workers, cost of additional days for poll sites and security) or not, there WILL BE early voting beginning on Oct. 27. Of course, having funds put in the budget for the counties will make it easier as the large counties downstate cannot even comprehend how this can be done without electronic poll books, but even if they get the necessary money, this is going to be complicated. As of right now, there is confusion and uncertainty at the board of Elections.

It is imperative that our county board of elections know that our Leagues will be working with them and the public to make the roll out of early voting go as smooth as possible. At the beginning of this month Leagues received a packet on voting reform and an attached form to send back. I want to commend the LWVNYC who has weekly contact with their BOE and the LWV of Cooperstown Area and the members in Orange County who had phone conversations with their commissioners. I do know that LWV of Suffolk County has had phone contact and is working on getting a date for meeting. All commissioners contacted so far have indicated they are uncertain how early voting can be successfully accomplished this year and are waiting for directions from the state. As of now on the NY Board of Elections webpage does not even indicate the dates for early voting for the general election.

What can our Leagues accomplish in a meeting with their Board of Elections? Beginning the conversation is important. The commissioners know that the LWVNY has lobbied for early voting. They need to know we are lobbying for the funding and would also advocate for those things to make the transition easier for them. In addition they need to realize that we will be working diligently to educate the public with dates, times and designated poll sites. Years ago, when our lever voting machines needed to be replaced, the LWVNY lobbied strongly for the paper ballot optical (PBO) scanner. Many county Board of Elections were skeptical of our choice. Once the PBOs were selected, Leagues throughout the state educated the public. Although there were complaints in the first years, the transition did go smoothly and our choice of PBOs have been validated.

The same can happen with early voting. Not having the funding yet makes it more complicated as does the very short time frame. However, this is even more reason why we need to work together. Contact your board of elections and email the report to LWVNY. We will share with other Leagues. Also share what and how your League is planning to educate the public. This year, the LWV of Cortland already has put together a presentation on 2019 election reforms. We have the reputation as being the experts. We are the gold standard. We can and will maintain our standard this year. It will require a lot of work but we are up to the challenge. Together we can do so much!

Youth Programs

Betty Ann King, bettyannking4@gmail.com



The LWVNY State Youth Committee held its first meeting via teleconference this month. We are always looking for more members for the Committee so please contact Bettyannking4@gmail.com if you'd like to join!.

The committee expressed heightened interest in the many topics and programs being shared by other Leagues. Of special note, was discussion involving taking successful programs and modifying to create new opportunities and enthusiasm. Certainly the "new" *Youth Engaging Youth Program: Next Step* from the Huntington League is a terrific example of how expansion and/or revision of an established program allows for civics education that

encompasses all hierarchical levels of learning and sparks new enthusiasm. See a description of this and many other great youth programs on the state website - [click here](#). *Vote 13*, a program that has emerged from the *Vote 18 program*, is another such example as are the many varied and creative ways Leagues present voter registration drives.

The vision for our youth programs in 5 years included positive agreement:

- There will be youth involvement
- Every League will provide at least one youth program annually
- Youth programs will incorporate voter service

Agreement as to what the role of this committee should be:

- To encourage youth programs
- To be a conduit of pertinent info via email and regular teleconferencing with Youth chairs and other members who are interested

Local League News

LWV of Cortland is organizing a education forum and community discussion entitled, *Why Don't US Citizens Elect their President Directly? The History and Impact of the Electoral College*. The speaker is Dr. Mary P. McGuire, PhD, Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Political Science at SUNY Cortland.

Youth Engaging Youth: The Next Step, a teen civic engagement forum sponsored by the **League of Women Voters of Huntington**, will be held in March. A panel of local youth activists will discuss how teens can make a difference in our community.

To celebrate Women's History Month, **LWV of Albany** is hosting speaker, Brooke Kroeger, a journalist, author and professor of journalism at NYU, will discuss her book, *"Suffragents: How Women Used Men to Get The Vote."* Brooke tells the story of how some of New York's most powerful men formed the Men's League for Woman Suffrage. The **Saratoga League** is also celebrating this month with its annual fundraiser, this year Breakfast with Carrie Chapman Catt. Linda McKenney, famous in this League and the wider community for her very convincing portrayals of Susan B. Anthony, will assume the character of a different suffragist, Carrie Chapman Catt.

In February, **LWV of Rochester** celebrated Susan B. Anthony's birthday with an event at the Susan B. Anthony Museum and House.

LWV of Schenectady offers a Citizenship Mentoring class that is non-partisan and aims to assist eligible permanent residents prepare for US Citizenship. Citizens participate in the democratic process by exercising their right to vote; only citizens can vote in federal, New York State, and local elections. The League of Women Voters believes in promoting the democratic process.

Kathleen Stein, the president of the **St. Lawrence County League of Women Voters**, discussed the new voting laws with North Country Matters host Donna Seymour in the latest North Country Matters video magazine. See Kathy's interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gCwEbBeRR0>.

LWV of Mid-Hudson has organized a discussion of the book, *Breaking Through Power* by Ralph Nader.

Two newly-elected Town Councilmen, David Lys (East Hampton) & Tommy John Schiavoni (Southampton), will engage in a discussion regarding township initiatives at a meeting of the **LWV of the Hamptons**.

LWV of Buffalo/Niagara is hosting a viewing of the documentary *Dark Money!* to learn how money from secret, out-of-state funders was used to buy influence with state legislators in Montana, and how a determined investigative journalist exposed their activities. **LWV of Brookhaven** is also hosting a

viewing of a film, *FIX IT*, which explains and comments on the single payer health plan proposed for New York State.

Presenter Julie Weisberg from Family Planning will share information and updates at a meeting of the **LWV of Broome and Tioga Counties** about two pieces of legislation integral to protecting and strengthening access to reproductive health care -- a vital component for women's health and equality -- here in New York state.

"Fact or Fake: Exploring the Role of Media in Politics." **LWV of Westchester**, in collaboration with the Westchester Library System (WLS), launches the second in its series Know Your Government. This program is designed to engage our communities in active discussions of how technology is influencing political change like never before and developing strategies for assessing the reliability of media content.

League of Women Voters of New York State
62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
Tel: 518-465-4162; FAX: 518-465-0812
Website: www.lwvny.org
Email: lwvny@lwvny.org
Facebook: League of Women Voters of NYS
Twitter: @LWVNYS

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