



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

March 2017



## From the State President

We know that many of you want to know what the state League board decided at its March 23-24 meeting about the position the League will take on the 2017 Constitutional Convention ballot question (oppose, support, or remain neutral). And we want you to know that the discussions many local Leagues held on this topic and shared with us were very much on our minds as we discussed it. We also want you to know that this wasn't an easy or lightly made decision.

The press release (click [here](#)) was distributed on Monday explaining that we will be supporting the Convention as a rare opportunity for citizens to take control of government and enact voting, ethics, and redistricting reforms. We have been urging these same reforms for many decades and getting almost nowhere. This past year the leaders of both houses were convicted on corruption charges and even then the legislature failed to adopt meaningful reform.

The option of a Constitutional Convention was put in the Constitution specifically for those times when the government was not responding to critical issues. It was intended to give citizens the power to act when the government will not. It is hard to argue that this is not such a time.

We know very well that there are real concerns in the public and within our League membership over the possible impact of an unlimited Convention even though any proposed changes would have to be approved by the public. The League shares some of these concerns. But we are the League of Women Voters and considering our inability to achieve critical reforms in the voting process and elsewhere, the state board could not see us passing up this opportunity to address the League's long-standing commitment to repair our broken state government.

Be assured that we will continue to educate the public on the ballot issue as we also educate on many of the prospective issues such as campaign finance and voting reforms on which we have clear advocacy goals. We will also be advocating for a delegate selection process that will help us all elect delegates that will put voters first, not their own political interests.

And that is what we are asking of ourselves. Whatever specific risks we are personally concerned about in opening up the whole constitution, as League members we need to stress the potential for reforms that we feel we cannot achieve any other way. We do not expect you to keep quiet as individual citizens about other concerns and Leagues are always welcome to put on forums that discuss all sides in our usual impartial way. In fact we *want* local Leagues to continue to educate the public on how the Constitutional Convention will work and some of the important issues it may address.

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## Lobby Day 2017

Mark your calendars for Lobby Day 2017 on **April 25** in Albany. We will hear from our issue specialists on "hot topics" and coordinate visits with your own legislators to lobby on issues.

## WANT TO TAKE ACTION?

You want to take action? Keep informed on legislative issues and League action? Join the new google group. See information below or email [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org) to sign up.

## Support the League Through Amazon

You can support the League's Education Foundation with every purchase you make on Amazon.com. Just select the LWVNY Education Foundation as the organization you want to support, and Amazon provides .05% of each purchase price to the EF. An easy way to support us! More info at: <https://org.amazon.com/>

But in discussing the Convention you need to be sure to state the League position. Members can always take action as individuals, but in order for the League to speak with one voice, local Leagues may not express opposition to that state board decision. Local Leagues, using the League name, must support this ballot proposal and cannot state that they are opposed or neutral on the proposal. A Constitutional Convention is an opportunity to achieve critical reforms that Albany has refused to make. We cannot allow this point to be drowned out by all the other noise that will surely surround this question.

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

## Travel with the League



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

## 57th Biennial State Convention - June 9-11



"FAILURE IS IMPOSSIBLE"

The 57<sup>th</sup> State League Convention is scheduled for June 10-11, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Express in Liverpool, NY (just off the Thruway near Syracuse). The Registration Kit is now available on the state website

(<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon/2017/Registration-Kit-2017.pdf>). Encourage all members to attend, even if as Visitors or for free to the workshops!

### Field Trip!

To celebrate women achieving the right to vote in 1917 in NYS, the state League is organizing a field trip from Liverpool to Seneca Falls on Friday, June 9 (day before Convention actually begins). This is will a separate charge and everyone is welcome (not just convention attendees); tours of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton home, Women's Hall of Fame and the Women's Rights National History Park (and Wesleyan Chapel), as well as dinner and a speaker at an historic restaurant in Seneca Falls, will be included. You will need to be in Liverpool by noon on Friday to join this trip. The Registration Form for this tour is also posted on the website (<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon/2017/Suffrage-Tour-Registration-Form.pdf>).

### Caucuses or Info Sessions

Local Leagues and members can offer **caucuses or info sessions** at the state Convention to share their own concerns or successes. Local leagues simply tell the state League that they would like to offer a caucus and we'll reserve a room for you. Then, you are responsible for presenting or coordinating the discussion on this topic.

### Volunteers are Needed!

Volunteers are needed to help at the state Convention. You should all send as many voting delegates as you are entitled, but if you have others that want to attend only part of Convention, encourage them to become volunteers. Here are some reasons why:

- Delegates can volunteer during non-plenary hours.
- Visitors can volunteer during plenary and observe plenary at no charge.
- Volunteering is a great way to meet and network with fellow Leaguers.

Contact Joan Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator, at 315-488-4339 or by email at [jaj62@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jaj62@twcny.rr.com). Anyone can attend the workshops on Saturday, June 10, in the morning, and, if they register as a Visitor, may observe the plenary sessions. Volunteers will be allowed to attend plenary also, as space permits.

### Awards

Your local League has accomplished some amazing things these past two years! You know it, and you need to get recognized for your hard work. Submit a Nominating Application to win an award for your hard work. The award categories are as follows:

- Carrie Chapman Catt Visibility And Leadership Award
- Inez Milholland Women's History Award

- Susan B. Anthony Making Democracy Work Award
- Victoria Woodhull Get Out The Vote Award
- Eleanor Roosevelt Youth Program Award
- Harriet Tubman Off The Beaten Path Award

The forms are attached and available on the state website homepage at: <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon/2017/Award-forms-2017.pdf>. Forms are due in the state office by April 28.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE HISTORY

### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dates

November 6, 2017	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State
November 19, 2019	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of New York State
February 14, 2020	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National League of Women Voters
August 26, 2020	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the official certification of the ratification of the 19 <sup>th</sup> amendment by the US Secretary of State



### Resource Packet for Local Programs

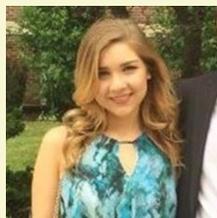
A packet of resources for local Leagues to organize programs and events on women's suffrage history has been mailed to every local League - and a new page has been created on the state website with links to all the info, as well as a [calendar](#) to see what events are scheduled, and a [blog on significant events and locations in women's history in NYS](#). Check out at all the resources at <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/womens-suffrage/index.html>. You might find a book or movie that you'd like to read or watch together with some League friends!

LWVUS has created a new logo to be used during these next 4 years to celebrate the League's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have customized it for NYS (on left). We have also created buttons that are for sale from the state office (on right) for \$1 plus tax and shipping.



## ADVOCACY AND PROGRAM UPDATE

*Jennifer Wilson, Director of Program & Policy,*  
[jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:jennifer@lwvny.org)



### Advocacy Training/Lobby Day

Advocacy training day will be held on **Tuesday, April 25, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm**. We have moved it into the Legislative Office Building for easier access to legislators and the capitol. We are charging \$15 which includes lunch. We have asked Issue Specialists to present their hot topics for this session and then encourage attendees to meet with their legislators and watch session from the galleries. The Registration Form is attached or available on the state website.

### Legislative Update

Barbara Bartoletti and I have been meeting with the new Senators to discuss our legislative agenda. During these meetings, we are also focusing on our election reform priorities and urging them to work with their colleagues to have the Comprehensive Coverage Act and Reproductive Health Act brought to the floor in the Senate. We also met with some Assembly Members on election reform and education issues. Over the last two month, we have sent memos of support to the Assembly and Senate on a number of election law, ethics, transparency, and health care related legislation. These include the Voter Friendly Ballot Act, a bill allowing for the usage of electronic poll books, pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds, a bill to close the LLC loophole, a bill to improve the fulfillment of FOIL requests, Single Payer, and legislation prohibiting e-cigarette usage near schools.

Now that budget negotiations are underway, we have turned our attention to monitoring the budget process and giving our input where appropriate. After the release of Governor Cuomo's executive budget proposal, we submitted testimony in support of greater funding for the State Board of Elections, additional transparency and ethics regulations for government agencies, and more funding for public schools.

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Kate Jankowski, Director of Communications & Development, [Kate@lwvny.org](mailto:Kate@lwvny.org)

### League Direct Mail Appeal

We continue to be active at the Capitol during this budget process. If you haven't already done so and you'd like to make a gift to support our advocacy efforts, please use this link to make a gift today: [https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/hQUE1blw9x-qEEC6eqk1Yg](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/hQUE1blw9x-qEEC6eqk1Yg). We are hard at work making our voices heard at the Legislature this year-speaking up for accessible and transparent government in New York State. Add your voice by making a gift to the League.

Many people support the Education Foundation but the League also engages in activities that cannot be funded through the EF, such as advocacy, service to local Leagues, and leadership training for members. This fundraising appeal is designed to highlight those activities and ask for support of our 501©4. **If you have already made a gift, thank you!**

### Create a Lasting Legacy for the League

The League has been around for almost 100 years, in part because of the vitality of our members and mission, and also because members who have gone before have remembered the League in their wills. Bequests are the most popular way donors make deferred gifts. By making a bequest to the League, you can maintain control of your assets during your lifetime and still support the League for the next generation of members. You can make a bequest that is a percentage of your estate or stipulate a specific dollar amount. To find out more about naming the League in your will, contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Coordinator, at (518) 465-4162 or via e-mail at [kate@lwvny.org](mailto:kate@lwvny.org).

## Be Earthwise!



**Be Earthwise**  
Preserve our Planet  
VOTE WITH YOUR \$\$ AND ACTIONS  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NYS

### Be Earthwise

Earlier this month the New York State League released our newest campaign: Be Earthwise. The goal of the campaign is to help citizens think about how their daily decisions can have a lasting impact on our environment. The campaign is being released in two

phases - the first phase asks people to take a pledge to Be Earthwise. They are asked to commit to respect the environment and to address effects of climate change through their daily activities and consumer purchases. Next month we will be unveiling part two of the campaign which will highlight some direct actions citizens can take on Earth Day to help reduce the incidence of climate change and global warming.

To get involved take the pledge now [here](#). A link to the campaign is also available on the state website homepage. Also be sure to tell us what Earthwise issues you want to learn more about and what citizen action do you think is most important to preserve our planet. So far we have had people from all over the country take the pledge and we hope that number will continue to grow as we near Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Please share this campaign and information with your friends and encourage them to participate in this important awareness and educational effort.

## LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS

At a recent **LWV of Rochester** forum, more than 60 attendees heard Sister Anne Urquhart, Sister Barbara Lum and Sister Josepha Twomey of the Sisters of St Joseph of Rochester tell the story of their work in Selma, Alabama. The Sisters of St. Joseph began their work in Selma in 1940 with black families living in poverty and grew through the decades to include teaching and nursing and starting a nursing school at Good Samaritan Hospital. This hospital treated blacks at a time when other hospitals in the area did not. In 1965 when marchers at the Edmund Pettis Bridge were beaten and no other hospital in the area would treat them, Good Samaritan with its 64 beds treated more than

100 victims. Among those seriously injured was John Lewis, currently a U.S. Congressman from Atlanta, Georgia, who visits the Sisters at the Mother House in our area whenever he is in town. The Sisters' first-hand accounts of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma and Alabama were riveting. See photos below - on left is LWV-RMA President Mary Hussong-Kallen with Sr. Josepha Twomey.



The Rosendale Theatre hosted a showing of the film "Electoral Dysfunction" with a post-film discussion on the Electoral College by Prof Joel Lefkowitz of SUNY New Paltz Department of Political Science & International Relations, organized by the **LWV of Mid-Hudson**.

The Rockefeller Drug Laws - Alternatives to Incarceration was the topic for the March meeting of the **LWV of Tompkins County**. The so-called Rockefeller drug laws have resulted in a massive increase in the number of incarcerated perpetrators of minor drug offenses, particularly of members of minority communities. Their Health Committee put together an excellent panel to discuss what is happening in our area: Professor Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, Cornell History Department; Matthew VanHouten, Tompkins County District Attorney; Honorable Judge Joseph R. Cassidy, Felony Drug Court; Angela Sullivan, MPA, MAIR, Executive Director, Alcohol/ Drug Council of Tompkins County; Bill Rusen, Chief Executive Director, Cayuga Addictions Rehabilitation Services (CARS).

**LWV of East Nassau** hosted Rabbi Dr. Art Vernon, who discussed "*The Courage of the Suffragists*," in recognition of March being Women's History Month and 2017 being the Centennial of Women's Suffrage in New York State.

**LWV of Syracuse** is a co-sponsor with the state League on the program, De-Mystifying the 2017 Constitutional Convention Ballot Proposal, to be held on April 27 at Onondaga Community College.

In keeping with the promise found at the base of the Statue of Liberty, the **LWV of Albany County** presented an in-depth look at the issues and concerns of the immigrant/refugee community in the Capital District as part of a panel discussion. The panel featured guest speakers from the Capital Region Refugee Roundtable, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the Refugee and Immigrant Support Services at Emmaus, the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society and the New Sanctuary for Immigrants. The panelists shared some "human interest stories" and then discussed the services they offer as well as ways that people can be involved and supportive of their mission.

"*Our Outer Harbor: What is it? Why should we care? What can we do?*" was the topic of the March meeting of the **LWV of Buffalo/Niagara**. Nicole Matteson of the Our Outer Harbor Coalition will speak about public policy concerns and Margaret Wooster will review the ecology of the Outer Harbor. An author, environmental advocate and teacher, Margaret is a well-loved Western New York authority on water and the ecology of our area. She is also author of "Somewhere to Go on Sunday" and "Living Waters: Reading the Rivers of the Lower Great Lakes."

Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNYS Legislative Director, was the speaker at the monthly **Lunch with the League in NYC**. She discussed the issue of reproductive choice. New York State was one of the first states to legalize abortion in 1970, three years before the Roe v. Wade decision. However, New York has never codified the Roe decision in our State statute placing a women's decision to have an abortion under the appropriate statute and protecting health care providers. Codifying Roe is a top League priority for this legislative session.

**LWV of Schenectady** held a program on *Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility and Adequate Funding for Indigents' Defense*. The panelists included: Assemblyman Phil Steck; City Court Judge Mark Blanchfield with moderator Helga A. Schroeter, of the League.

**LWV of Broome and Tioga Counties** held a program on *How Big Pharma Influenced the Practice of Psychiatry* with League Member, Ruth Blizzard, presenting. Ruth Blizzard is a psychologist in Binghamton, NY, with over 30 years of experience in treating persons with severe trauma, dissociation, and personality disorders.

The **LWV of Geneva** organized its annual fundraiser, Wine and Chocolate Night Out, open to the public and held at the Billsboro Winery.

The Natural Resources Committee of the **LWV of the Hamptons** will present "Wind, A Clean Energy Solution" in April. Renewable energy as a cost-effective reliable solution to Long Island's electricity needs. Panelists include Michael Voltz, P.E., Director of Energy Efficiency & Renewables, PSEG Long Island; Clint Plummer, Vice President of Development Deepwater Wind; and Doreen Harris Program Manager, Large Scale Renewables, NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research & Development Authority)

Next Generation Politics and the **LWV of Huntington** have recently begun working in conjunction to advance our common goals of educating and involving young people in government and the political process. As an entirely student-run organization and movement, Next Generation Politics' chapter leaders seek to engage fellow students to interact with their government representatives, debate critical issues, and participate in government.

New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins will speak on "Political & Policy Issues on National & State Levels of Government" at the annual luncheon co-sponsored by the **League of Women Voters of Larchmont-Mamaroneck, New Rochelle, Rye, Rye Brook, Port Chester and Harrison.**

**LWV of New Castle** is presenting a program, "*Media and Politics: The Impact on Our Democracy*" which will address the issues and the impact the media had on the 2016 Presidential election and will have on elections moving forward, both local and national. Panelists include Jon Klein, Cable News and Internet Executive; Jerry McKinstry, Media Strategist and Journalist; Phil Reisman, Columnist/Radio Talk Show Host; with moderator, Jeanne Zaino, PH.D., Political Analyst and Professor at Iona College.

**LWV of the North Country** invited Helen Nerska, County Historian, to discuss *Women's Suffrage in Clinton County*. Helen Nerska discussed the early role of Clinton County women in the suffrage movement.

**LWV of Saratoga County** is holding a consensus meeting to discuss a possible new local position. The League's study committee will present its findings relating to "whether local governments in Saratoga County should separate executive (or administrative) functions from legislative (or policy making) functions in the villages, towns, cities and the county government."

The program "*Votes for Women: Celebrating New York's Suffrage Centennial*" will be presented by Jennifer Lemak and Ashley Hopkins-Benton, organized by the **LWV of Utica/Rome**. Jennifer Lemak is the Chief Curator of History and Ashley Hopkins-Benton is Senior Curator of History at the New York State Museum. Both Lemak and Hopkins-Benton are curating the NYSM exhibition, Votes for Women: Celebrating New York's Suffrage Centennial, which opens on November 4, 2017. The exhibition will include collections from over 40 lenders statewide including the Clinton Historical Society.

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](http://www.lwvny.org)  
Email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org)  
Facebook: League of Women Voters of NYS  
Twitter: @LWVNYS