



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

February 2014



## From the President

Something unusual and exciting happened this year in Albany. Governor Cuomo included proposals for campaign finance reform, including public financing, in his Executive Budget. Including CFR in his budget has provided the League with a new timetable for lobbying. Last week, the League joined other good government groups in a press conference urging the Governor and the legislative leaders to pass comprehensive campaign finance reform, including a matching public financing system, as part of the final budget. We emailed information on action all members can take NOW to lobby for this passage. Click [here](#) to view that email and information. The budget will probably pass by the deadline of April 1, so there is only a short window of opportunity to advocate for CFR in the budget.

The state League is also organizing regional training workshops in four locations around the state during the next month (Albany, Long Island, Binghamton and Rochester). We encourage all members to attend these workshops. Come learn more about the League and how you can become more involved. These are not intended to be lectures, but rather an opportunity to discuss successful (and perhaps not-so-successful) programs and techniques with other League members. Click [here](#) for the registration form, locations and dates (more information in article below, too).

Thanks for all that you do for the League. And, watch our website as the legislative session heats up and the League takes more action.

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## Cuba Trip

This year the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund will sponsor several trips to Cuba as part of Sisters Across the Straits, a project designed to provide League members with a unique opportunity to learn about the nation's history, culture and developing political scene. For each Member who joins the trip, LWVFEF will donate \$50 to your local League Education Foundation. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Regional Training Workshops Open to ALL



### Workshops in Albany this Saturday (March 1) and Binghamton next Saturday (March 8) - Join Us!

The state League is organizing interactive and essential networking and training workshops around the state during March and April 2014; workshops will be held from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm on Saturdays. All local Leagues are strongly encouraged to have ALL board members attend part or all of one of

the training sessions; all members are also invited to attend any or all of the workshops. Directions to all locations will be emailed when registration is received.

There are a variety of workshops planned. These are not intended to be lectures, but rather an opportunity to discuss successful (and perhaps not-so-successful) programs and techniques in each of these categories.

Hear from a League specialist, as well as your fellow League members in attendance. Ask questions, discuss the pros and cons and effectiveness of various strategies, and share your own League's stories. You'll find that there is a wealth of knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm just waiting to be shared!

- **March 1, Albany** (McKnownville Church, 1565 Western Ave, Albany - at end of Northway and Exit 24 of Thruway)
- **March 8**, Binghamton (Broome Co. Public Library, 185 Court St, Binghamton)
- **March 29**, Long Island (Cold Spring Harbor Library, 95 Harbor Rd, Cold Spring Harbor)
- **April 5**, Rochester (Brighton Parks and Rec Building)

Workshops will include the following topics:

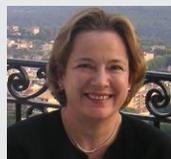
- **Vote 411** (beginners & refresher): Where do I start? (bring laptop if possible)
- **Membership**: Attracting and retaining members doesn't "just happen"!
- **Leadership**: League leaders are often made, not born. Are we building our future?
- **Lunch** (provided): Network with League members and share your current local activities and efforts
- **Vote 411** (experienced): Gripes, Grins & Going Forward (bring laptop if possible)
- **Advocacy and Issues**: What's going on in the state legislature now? And, share what hot issue is in your own community now?
- **Fundraising Idea-Sharing**: Minimal Pain, Maximum Gain
- **Visibility: Are You a Player?** How to increase connections with media, politicians, other groups, and "The Public"
- **Candidate Forums**: Policies, Guidelines and Staying Out of Trouble

Click [here for the registration form](#); deadline is one week prior to the training session, (eg, Feb. 21 for the Albany training on March 1). There is a \$10 fee per person to cover lunch and materials. All members are invited to attend.

Come network with other area League members, learn more about the League and see how you can get more involved!

## Issues and Advocacy

Sally Robinson, [robinwins@gmail.com](mailto:robinwins@gmail.com)



Most of the League's advocacy efforts this month have focused on the Governor's budget. We presented testimony before the Joint Legislative Committees on the 2014-15 Executive Budget in the areas of [Public Protection](#) (where election reform and campaign finance reform is located), [elementary and secondary education finance](#), and [taxes](#). All of the testimonies are posted on the homepage of the state [website](#) as well as within the appropriate individual advocacy area on the Advocacy page.

The state League participated in a press conference with other good government organizations to strongly encourage the Governor and legislative leaders to keep all parts of comprehensive campaign

finance reform in the budget. The [letters to the Governor](#) and legislative leaders, [press release](#), photos and a [video](#) are all posted on the state website - feel free to link on your local websites. An email was also sent out to all members encouraging them to contact or write their state legislators encouraging the same. Click here for the [email](#) and the sample letters and talking points are linked in that email. There is a short window of opportunity for this action as it relates to the budget so we encourage local Leagues to take action now before the end of March.

The League is also a member of the Coalition for More Family Court Judges. The Judiciary budget includes a request for additional resources, including 20 new Family Court Judges statewide. The coalition is asking members to contact the Governor and legislative leaders to urge them to approve this budget request and increase the number of Family Court judges. Click [here](#) for the link to take action.

## **GRASSROOTS LOBBYING**

*Carol Mellor, [camellor@aol.com](mailto:camellor@aol.com)*

### **Environmental Issues Conference Call**

Thank you all for your interest in our latest Update on Issues conference call on environmental issues. The sheer number of people who expressed interest in the issues discussed was extremely impressive and I think I can speak for Beth Radow and the other members of the committee in thanking you for your interest and participation. Click [here](#) to view Beth's notes, which many of you asked for.



In addition, Beth and other members of the committee are working on a proposal for a study of the practice of fracking to be brought before this June's convention. Please be on the lookout for the announcement from Beth and, please, if possible, bring this before your Board this month for possible inclusion in your program selections to be submitted to national.

I look forward to the next call and appreciate any suggestions as to issues of interest! If any member has suggestions for future conference calls, please contact Carol Mellor, [camellor@aol.com](mailto:camellor@aol.com).

### **Constitutional Amendment on Redistricting**

A constitutional amendment on redistricting is on the ballot in November 2014. The culmination of the fight to revise the manner in which New York draws its state and congressional maps will be in November, when the voters will be asked to vote on a constitutional amendment which would authorize an independent redistricting commission.

The independent commission would consist of 10 members. The four legislative leaders would each get two appointments. Those eight members would then pick two people who have not been enrolled in a major political party for five years. All commission members must be registered voters. None can have been an elected official, state employee, political party chairman or lobbyist within three years of joining the commission. The new rules would also explicitly prohibit anyone from drawing lines that protect incumbents and instead divide the state's population as equally as possible. (Now, political districts can vary in population by as much as 10 percent.) All federal requirements for protecting racial, ethnic and other communities of interest would still apply.

The League supported passage of this amendment in the legislature and is now planning a campaign to educate voters on the plan and to encourage them to vote for it in November. Details and materials on the campaign will be forthcoming and will be included in the Regional Training sessions to be held around the state this month.

## Pay Equity Specialists

Barb Thomas, [barb.lwv@nycap.rr.com](mailto:barb.lwv@nycap.rr.com) and  
Lois Haignere, [haigner@nycap.rr.com](mailto:haigner@nycap.rr.com)

Equal Pay Day is April 8. The Assembly is planning to pass their three very good equal pay for job titles of comparable worth bills on that day. See the February 3 League Advocacy Day handout on comparable worth/pay equity for the bill numbers, sponsors and a brief description of what each bill implements. All materials from the League Advocacy Day are posted on the state website (click [here](#)).

The Senate will not be in session the week of April 8th and has never allowed a vote on these bills. (Sound familiar?) Stay tuned for statewide equal pay/pay equity activities in early April, and let us know of any related actions you are planning.

## Lobby Day (Advocacy Training Day)

Over 70 people joined us in Albany on Feb. 3 to learn about our advocacy agenda and hear from the League's Issue Specialists on their specific issues and expectations for this legislative session. All materials, including a summary from each Issue Specialist, are posted on the website and linked here:



- [League Advocacy Process \(all levels\)](#)
- [State League Advocacy Process](#)
- [Local League Advocacy Process](#)
- [LWVUS Issues and Advocacy Process](#)
- Campaign Finance Reform Update
  - [Power Point Presentation](#)
  - [Handout Summary](#)
- [Environmental Issues Update](#)
- [Election Reform Update](#)
- [Financing Education Update](#)
- [Memo on Increasing Number of Family Court Judges](#)
- [Transportation Update](#)
- [Women's Equality Coalition Update](#)
- [Pay Equity Update](#)
- [10 Tips to Lobby Legislators](#)

These materials provide a wealth of information on a number of issues - all which will become very helpful as the legislative session continues and we ask for member action.

## Forum on Election Reform

The State League is co-sponsoring an educational forum with the Rockefeller Institute on election reform issues, including early voting, better ballot design, improved voter registration and absentee ballot procedures. The forum will be held on **Monday, March 24, 11:00-12:30** at the Rockefeller Institute in Albany. Legislative Elections Committee Chairs, Senator Thomas O'Mara and Assemblymember Michael Cusick will join Tom Wilkey, former Executive Director of the US Election Assistance Commission and former Executive Director of the NYS Board of Elections, on this panel discussion. Capitol Correspondent Susan Arbetter will moderate. All League members and the public

are invited to attend. The forum will be videotaped and posted on the Rockefeller Institute website - the state League will post a link on its website, too.

## Local League News

Congratulations to Georgia DeGregorio, **LWV of the Rochester Metropolitan Area**, for being selected again as a member of the LWVUS Ruth S. Shur Fellows team in the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Program. She will serve a two-year term to support state coaching teams in mentoring local Leagues in recruiting and engaging members and the community.



The **LWV of Schenectady County** is holding a program called, "*Where Will Common Core Take Us?*" during February. Speakers will be, Christine Preisinger, College of St. Rose School of Education and Dr. Teresa Snyder, Superintendent of Voorheesville Central School District. And, across the state, the **LWV of Buffalo/Niagara** is sponsoring a panel discussion called, "*Learn More About Common Core: A Forum for the Community.*" The **LWV of Southwest Nassau** also explored the topic of Common Core during a program they co-sponsored with Hewlett-Woodmere School District PTA, "*Our Children Aren't Common, Their Education Shouldn't Be Either.*"

The **LWV of Broome/Tioga Counties** is hosting a public meeting during February called, "*Can Your Town Ban Fracking?*" This program will be presented by Deborah Goldberg, managing attorney in the New York City office of EarthJustice, and Joe Heath, a Syracuse-based environmental attorney and general counsel for the Onondaga Nation. Fracking will also be discussed at an open meeting in Chautauqua County in early March. The **LWV of Chautauqua County** has been invited to speak at the meeting.

The **LWV of Albany** had assistance from LWVNYS Energy, Environment and Agriculture Chair Beth Radow to submit a letter to DEC concerning transportation of crude oil by railroad through Albany. The letter was covered in the media [here](#). Climate change is the topic of discussion at the February meeting of the **LWV of Cortland** with SUNY Cortland Professor Larry Klotz presenting the program.

Meetings to introduce members to local representatives are happening around the state during March. The **LWV of the Hamptons** is hosting "Our Town Supervisors" and the **Syracuse Metropolitan Area League** is holding its annual "Legislative Breakfast." The **LWV of East Nassau** is also having their "Legislative Reception" in early March. The **LWV of Rensselaer County** had a successful post-holiday meeting in January. Kathleen M. Jimino, Rensselaer County Executive, spoke about the priorities of her administration over the next four years.

In Larchmont, the **LWV of Larchmont/Mamaroneck** is hosting a forum to meet and question the candidates for the Larchmont Village Board; the election will be held in March.



As a fundraiser for **LWV of Saratoga**, "*The Stone that Started the Ripple*," a one-act play written by Pat Nugent, former President of LWV of Saratoga, was performed in January at Skidmore College. It is humorous yet historical representation of a modern day reunion of the women who initiated the crusade for women's right to vote. Using their actual words from the 1800's, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, and Lucretia Mott offer commentary on the status of women's issues today.

**LWV of Mid-Hudson** is busy completing the LWVUS study on the agriculture update; consensus responses are due in April. Then, they have plans for speakers on both of the LWVNYS studies of ballot access and term limits.

To celebrate Women's History Month, **LWV of Huntington** is co-sponsoring a program at the Cinema Arts Centre. The film **Arise** is narrated by Daryl Hannah and highlights women from across the world who achieved success in preserving the environment in their countries. **LWV of Rochester** members attending the Susan B. Anthony Annual Birthday Luncheon enjoyed viewing the video *Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage* with a flash mob dancing in front of the screen. During Women's History Month, **LWV of Utica/Rome** will present their archives to the Oneida County Historical Society. This will allow for preservation of these articles as well as access by the public. Mary Q. Chapin will also be present to discuss the history of women's suffrage in our country.

**LWV of Buffalo/ Niagara** volunteers participated in three naturalization ceremonies during January and the beginning of February.

"Immigration Reform: What will it mean to the undocumented population on Long Island?" was the topic of a recent presentation by **LWV of Brookhaven**. Daniel Altschuler, Director, LI Civic Engagement Table spoke at the meeting.

The **LWV of NYC** has had great success with their "Lunch with the League" series. The January program is now available on YouTube: issue was affordable housing, guest speaker RuthAnne Visnauskas, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. More info found on the YouTube [link](#). The February meeting was well attended and our guest speakers were terrific! LWVNYS Legislative Director Barbara Bartoletti and President Sally Robinson spoke about comprehensive campaign finance reform efforts. For Women's History Month, the LWV NYC Lunch with the League meeting will feature guest speaker Kathy Groob author of "*Pink Politics: the Woman's Practical Guide to Winning Elections*", and founder of the Elect Women movement.

## Legacy Support



### 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 passed away 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 email at [kate@lwny.org](mailto:kate@lwny.org).

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