



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

State Board Updates: December 2015

Local League leaders, does your League board review the TO-DO listed below at every board meeting? Are you sure these things are truly getting done? If you can't say YES to either question, take the list to your next meeting yourself! We know local leagues often have to pick and choose among League studies and other activities but some of these items are truly MUST-DOs to avoid problems!

Local League To Do's (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- Access to the newly revised LWVUS database is now available– see how to get your access below. Ensure that you have a Roster Manager for access to the new LWVUS Database – and update your list of members **by Jan. 31** (to determine your 2016-17 PMP amount)
- Call Katrina NOW (518-465-4162) to let us know if you are sending a student to 2016 Students Inside Albany Conference.
- Schedule a Fall membership meeting to consider the concurrence on “Raise the Age” and return Concurrence Response Form **by January 1, 2016**.
- Schedule meetings to consider LWVUS studies on Money in Politics (due Feb. 1)

President's Report/Membership Report: Dare Thompson, darethompson@gmail.com

I hope we are all taking some time to enjoy the holidays and appreciate all the good friends and family members who bolster us all year long. Being state president has made me more aware than ever of our rich network. Some of you are wonderfully familiar faces, but even those of you who may only be a friendly voice on the phone or a note or donation check in the mail send vital signals of interest and support that make us a powerful force, a League! **I thank you all.**

I was so glad to see many of you at **UN DAY** along with the new LWVUS Executive Director, Wylecia Wiggs Harris, and two LWVUS board members, Anne Schink and Rosalee Keech. Since the UN staff kept us moving right along (and even walked us to the restrooms), there wasn't much time for socializing but oh my goodness, what great speakers we had on women's issues and counter terrorism and how inspiring it was to hear from Rosalee about the integral role the League has played in the UN's 70-year history.

In these dark days, a visit like that can truly give us hope for peace on Earth and good will toward ...er, People and the Planet!

Membership and Visibility

The Membership Committee is having a great time **calling every local League** to talk with leaders about their aspirations and (ultimately) how the state League might help. Like snowflakes (inappropriate seasonal reference this fall!) every local League is unique, which makes this fun for us, but that said, common themes emerge. We will address them. As Preet says, "Stay tuned!"

The **Visibility Sub-Committee** is also working to figure out ways to make sure that however someone is trying to reach any of us (website, social media, mail and email, phone, etc.), they will see just how interesting and helpful we truly are. We are also working to be sure that our name is "out there" where people see it. Get Out the Vote efforts are a particularly good and mission-strong way to do this and we are developing some plans around that. Stay tuned on that too.

And visibility will be one of the issues dealt with at our **REGIONAL MEETINGS** to be held in four sites from Buffalo to NYC in March and April. (Buffalo is in April of course when we can hope the snow shovels just MAY be retired). We're urging you to tell us what else you want us to focus on, so **SPEAK UP!** Also, if you are doing something particularly well, please let us know so we can share it at these meetings. Local Leagues learn more from one another, not us, in so many areas! Let's not waste time "reinventing wheels"!

Voter Services Report: Judie Gorenstein, JudieL728@aol.com

There is a lot of good news this December regarding voter service. First, 26 local leagues have completed their voter service surveys. Of these, only two did not hold a debate or a meet the candidates night forum and one was due to the fact that their candidates were all running unopposed. There were only four other leagues that had to cancel a debate because only one party agreed to participate (they were following the no open chair policy recommended by the LWV) but these leagues held other debates or forums. All of the leagues reporting a debate or forum had at least some of the questions come from the audience. Most had written questions that were screened; two had questions asked directly by the audience; and five leagues had a mixture of both written screened questions and those asked by audience. Attendance ranged from 15 people to 500 but as the majority of leagues indicated, their events were videotaped and aired and all but one had media coverage. Our local leagues are doing well in reaching people other than those who actually attend. Congratulations leagues! It was also good to see that 17 of the leagues did have debate policy guidelines, some more extensive than others. Once again, the state league stresses the importance of having guidelines in place, in writing, and well publicized. Several leagues indicated they were in the process of either reviewing or developing their league's policy. This is great!

The bad news this fall is what we all know. New York ranks 49 in low voter turnout! What as the league can we do?

It was clear from the surveys as well as the teleconferences held this fall, that local leagues are constantly striving to run successful candidates nights and voter registration drives but are also

frustrated by the low turnout. The state league hears you. By Feb. 2016, we will be setting up a google group to have an on line conversation where we can learn from one another and share ideas, concerns, problems and resolutions. (In January we will let you know how to be part of this conversation.) This spring we will hold voter service workshops but even before then will be providing templates of not only recommended policy guidelines, but also letters to the candidates, and press releases and templates for PSAs.

What can you do? If you have not yet completed and returned your voter service survey, please do so in order that we may have a complete and accurate database. Most of all now, have a very Happy Holiday Season, take time to enjoy and relax and have a very Happy New Year. 2016 promises to be very busy!

Issues and Advocacy Report: Sally Robinson, robintwins@gmail.com

On November 11, the League appeared at a press conference at Foley Square in front of the courthouse where the Silver trial was happening and the Skelos trial would begin to call for comprehensive ethics reform. Simultaneously the same groups sent a letter to the legislative leaders and the Governor asking for a long list of ethics reforms. Press release and letter are posted on homepage of the state website.

The League testified in Albany before the Assembly Elections Committee on November 18, and in New York City on December 10 before the Assembly Elections Committee Subcommittee on Election Day Operations and Voter Disenfranchisement. The Albany testimony emphasized modernizing voter registration and early voting as a means of increasing voter participation and the testimony in NYC, both posted on the website, covered the same items, but with more emphasis on Election Day operations.

Advocacy Training/Lobby Day – **NEW DATE**

The date for this Advocacy Training and Lobby Day has been changed to **Tuesday, May 10th**! We're still developing the exact schedule, but we are tentatively planning on presentations by our Issue Specialists on "hot topics" in the morning, lunch for networking, and then lobby visits with your own legislators to lobby our League priority issues (still to be determined). Watch for more info – but mark your calendar now!

Living Wage Committee and Paid Family Leave: Barb Thomas, barb.lwv@nycap.rr.com

Living Wage Committee

The Living Wage Committee was charged by the LWVNY Convention 2015 to determine what is an appropriate living wage for our state and its localities.

LWVUS has said that Leagues may take action on a living wage under the national position on Meeting Basic Human Needs that includes the statement "People who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care." The position further states that, "one of the goals of social policy should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and

families.” Guidance from LWVUS requires that state and local leagues do the research necessary to determine what an appropriate wage is for their own community.

The committee further defined a living wage using the Buffalo/Niagara concurrence with the LWV Kansas position: *A living wage should provide sufficient income without government assistance, for food, clothing, housing, energy, transportation, health care, education, child care, and a small amount of discretionary income.*

The full report from the Committee is attached. With this analysis, the state League can now support the proposed \$15 minimum wage. The calculator developed by MIT to determine a living wage is [here](#).

Act now to encourage Governor Cuomo and the NYS Senate to pass the Paid Family Leave Act! The League supports gender neutral paid family leave from employment to care for a sick child, spouse, or parent. Paid Family Leave can pass in the upcoming legislative session. But to get it passed we have to demonstrate public support.

To help show your support you can:

- Download the petition [here](#)
- Gather signatures from your friends, family, co-workers, any adult you run into
- Return the petitions to the LWVNY office by snail or email by January 25, 2016. Even if there are only 2 signatures on a petition send it in by the deadline.
- Attend the Paid Family Leave Coalition Lobby Day on February 2 in Albany
- Write a letter to the editor – personal stories about the need are especially effective

New York Paid Family Leave Lobby Day will be held in Albany on February 2nd. Invite your friends and register [here](#)

Energy, Environment and Agriculture Committee: Beth Radow, enradow@gmail.com

Addressing Food Waste’s Ripple Effects to the Climate. In 2013, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, 21.1 percent of America’s 167 million tons of municipal waste consisted of food. This organic waste decomposes in landfills emitting methane gas which has a global warming potential more than 25 times greater than carbon dioxide. That’s a whopping 35.2 million tons of food that could have been used to feed people and livestock or composted to grow a new cycle of food, if handled differently. All that food waste contains significant resources which are also wasted, such as water, fertilizer, paper products, fossil fuel for growing, transportation and storage, and human labor. This food waste/climate change link is so critical America now has a national policy to address it. On Sept. 16, 2015, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the United States’ first-ever national food waste reduction goal of 50 percent by 2030. This announcement in the week before the United Nations General Assembly met to discuss sustainable development practices signaled the urgent need to shift how America produces, sells, uses and discards our food.

On December 7, 2015, United States Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-ME) introduced the Food Recovery Act, a comprehensive bill that seeks to address food waste from the farm to table.

<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/12/14/3731628/food-waste-bill/> While the New York State League cannot take action without coordinating with National, the goals in this bill are worthy of consideration for action taken to reduce food waste in New York.

Closer to home, Beth Radow, who chairs the Committee on Energy, Agriculture and the Environment met on December 15, 2015 with Assemblymember Steve Otis who sits on the New York State Assembly's Environmental Conservation Committee. Assemblymember Otis has been appointed to chair the Legislative Commission on Solid Waste and the Assembly's 10 member Climate Change Task Force. Steve Otis and Beth Radow discussed climate change, the role of food waste management and related topics. The conversation will be ongoing. League members with local or proposed statewide solutions to reduce food waste (whether lending themselves to legislative or otherwise) are encouraged to send them to Beth by e-mail at enradow@gmail.com

From the State League Office: Laura Ladd Bierman, laura@lwvny.org

2016 Students Inside Albany Conference

The 2016 Students Inside Albany Conference will be held in Albany from May 22-25, 2016, at the Albany Hilton. We have heard from a number of local Leagues, but WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM THE FOLLOWING LEAGUES (we apologize if you have told us – just let us know again):

LWV of Brookhaven	LWV of Saugerties
LWV of Cazenovia	LWV of Schuyler
LWV of Cortland County	LWV of Smithtown
LWV of Eastern Putnam County	LWV of Southwest Nassau
LWV of Geneva	LWV of the Greater Oneida Area
LWV of Harrison	LWV of Utica Metro. Area
LWV of Larchmont/Mamaroneck	St. Lawrence MAL Unit
LWV of Mid Hudson Region	Nassau Co ILO
LWV of New Rochelle	Westchester Co ILO
LWV of New York City	Suffolk Co ILO
LWV of Rye-Rye Brook	

Space is limited and unless you tell us that you are planning a student (or two), we cannot reserve a space. YOU MUST LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON SENDING A STUDENT NOW (or tell us you are not sending a student). You do not need to have the student already selected; we just need to know that you would like to send a student and are trying to find a student. Recruitment materials are posted on the Youth page of the state website (<http://lwvny.org/youth.html>). The forms to be completed by the student(s) selected by the local League will be available in January and MUST be returned to the state office by March 1, 2016.

Regional Training Workshops

The state League is offering training workshops for all League members in 4 locations around the state on Saturdays during March and April, 2016. These workshops will cover many aspects of local League management, as well as advocacy, current issues and more. Encourage all members, especially local board members, to attend. The schedule currently is:

- March 5 in NYC
- March 12 in Round Lake (north of Albany, halfway to Saratoga)
- April 2 in Syracuse area (Liverpool Public Library)
- April 9 in Buffalo (Harlem Road Community Center, Amherst)

Development: Kate Jankowski, Kate@lwny.org

Online Gift Matching Challenge by the Board

From now until midnight on December 31, 2015, the LWNYS Board will match any gift we receive online up to \$8,000. Please help us meet their challenge by donating online today. Click here to make your gift: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/tepqI9fDGf2XGOsOmHT1UQ

If you have already made a gift to the Education Foundation this year, thank you!

Monthly Giving

Over the past several years, many donors have discovered the ease and opportunity of making a monthly gift to the state League. Year-end is a great time to consider joining a monthly giving program. When you sign up for monthly giving, your gift is charged automatically to your credit card each month, you will no longer get appeal letters so you save paper and postage, and you can often give more to your favorite charities by spreading out your gift than you would be able to give in one lump sum. It's also a win for your favorite charities because they know they can depend on that income each month and they save on printing and postage.

If you are interested in joining our monthly giving program, click one of the links below and choose "monthly" from the "Donation Schedule" drop down menu.

For monthly gifts to the League of Women Voters of New York State:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/4DOYe-xOvWJuG5rdjJxe6Q

(gifts to the League support our advocacy work and are not tax deductible so they are harder to raise and much appreciated)

For monthly gifts to the LWNYS Education Foundation:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/ai-Wav_MMuwE6lJy8s8rBg

(gifts to the LWNYS Education Foundation support only educational activities of the state League and are tax deductible)

Stock Gifts

If you are someone who has invested in stock over the years, donated appreciated shares is a great way to make a gift. You can support your favorite charities and get a tax benefit from your donation while avoiding the capital gains taxes on the shares you donate. If you are interested in transferring stock as a gift to the Education Foundation, please contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Director, by phone at (518) 465-4162 or by email at kate@lwny.org.

In Your Local League

Please consider joining in the year-end giving season by raising funds for your local League. You can include the quick and easy online giving form available to allow your donors to make tax deductible gifts directly to your grants management fund. To ask for gifts this way, you can insert the link below into an email or on your website. Link for gifts to your grants management fund: [Local League EF Donations](#). Should you have any questions about using the link or need any other information about year-end fundraising, please contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Director, by phone at (518) 465-4162 or by email at kate@lwny.org.

LWVUS

LWVUS Database is finally active again! Contact Katrina at 518-465-4162 or katrina@lwny.org for help, questions, and advice!

The newly redesigned LWVUS database is now up again. They are slowly rolling out access to all local Leagues. **Local Leagues in NYS now have access.** In order to get access, however, you have to have one of your members signed up as the Roster Manager (could be membership chair, treasurer, etc) and then she/he MUST complete a number of steps:

- An email alert two weeks in advance to remind you of your League's start date
- On the start date, you will receive an email invitation with detailed instructions on next steps and links to training materials and a **comprehensive demonstration video**.
- Once you have gone over the materials to familiarize yourself with the new database, you will be asked to take an easy six question survey.
- After you have completed the survey to acknowledge you have gone over the materials, you will be emailed a link to set up your new password. You will have 24 hours to access that link and set up your password. Your username will be the email address you used to sign up as a Roster Manager.

A staff member at LWVUS is available for ongoing support and to answer questions. Questions can be emailed to RosterSupport@lwny.org. If your local Leagues hasn't notified LWVUS as to who is the Roster Manager, contact Rostersupport@lwny.org. More info on the process is also available here: <http://forum.lwny.org/member-resources/article/new-lwnyus-online-database-here> .

All prior data is in the new system and Leagues will only need to add new members or update information that has changed since May 2015. As usual, by January 31, 2016, you MUST have your roster up-to-date as the PMP charged for 2016-17 will be based on the members listed as "active" on January 31.

Also, Katrina in the state office has completed all the instructions and had access for the month of November – don't hesitate to contact her (katrina@lwny.org or 518-465-4162) for assistance or if you have questions!

Money in Politics Materials – Consensus Due by Feb. 1

The final MIP background papers in the series have been posted. [Hard, Soft and Dark Money](#) presents ways used by outside groups try to influence elections through hard money, soft money and dark money and [Options to Reform Money in Politics](#) covers campaign finance reform strategies that are

currently allowable in the wake of Supreme Court decisions. The [official MIP Consensus form](#) is also posted for Leagues to use to report their consensus reports. All these materials can be found on the [Money in Politics page](#). For additional information, please contact Barbara Zia, MIP Committee Chair at MIPCommitteeChair@lwv.org.

Participate in LWVUS Program Planning 2016

Soon Leagues will have an opportunity to offer input for the LWVUS program for the 2016-2018 biennium. This important League process will culminate with adoption of a program of education and action at the LWVUS Convention in Washington, DC, in June 2016. Program planning materials will be posted by mid-December in the [Convention section](#) of the [League Management website](#). For additional information or questions contact Program Outreach Committee Chair Barbara Zia at progplan@lwv.org. Plan a meeting or board agenda item to discuss this in your local League and respond to LWVUS requests.

Opportunity to Attend UN Commission on the Status of Women Session

All members are invited to participate in the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to be held from March 14-24, 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The priority theme is “Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development”. We are limited to 20 attendees. Please contact unobserver@lwv.org if you are interested in attending.