



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: July 2015

If you are no longer President or on your local League board, please forward this to the appropriate board member – and be sure that your League has submitted the changes in your board to the state office.

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

- Complete and return brief survey on Voter Services Issues and possible teleconferences (attached)
- Schedule a Fall membership meeting to consider the concurrence on “Raise the Age”
- Schedule meetings in late Fall to consider LWVUS studies on Money in Politics and US Constitutional Amendment Process
- Email Katrina@lwvny.org to sign up to participate in state committees on minimum wage or program planning (see Issues and Advocacy report)

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

Encouraging citizens to be informed voters is a major mission of the League. I was surprised last year to see how many Leagues did not complete the voter service survey that was emailed to them. Many of those Leagues that did complete it indicated problems they encountered while trying to arrange a Meet the Candidates Night or problems they encountered during that night. At the Voter Service workshop during this year's convention, we began to look at what we do to engage voters and how to have successful candidates' nights. It was apparent that there is not an easy answer but that the League members who attended the workshop were motivated to discuss ideas and find some solutions. We decided this workshop was only the beginning of a process and that teleconferences would be beneficial. Carol Mellor (LWVNYS Grassroots Director) has agreed to help in arranging the conferences. Many Leagues take a hiatus during the summer. However, Aug. is also the time to begin planning for Meet the Candidates Nights.

- Which Leagues would be interested in participating in a teleconference on Meet the Candidates Nights?
- When is the best time to have this teleconference?
- Are there other voter service items that League would like to cover: i.e., setting up successful voter service drives, motivating voters, gaining visibility for Vote 411?

A survey is attached to this email; it is important that your response is emailed to the state office so that we can begin this important work.

This year it will be important to let voters know that **Primary Day is on a Thursday, Sept. 10.**

Also, anyone who wants to change his/her party affiliation and vote in next year's presidential primary, must submit the revised voter registration form or change their affiliation on My DMV website by Oct. 9, 2015. Changes in party affiliation must be registered prior to the general election preceding the primary in which the person wants to vote (before November 2015 to vote in primaries in 2016). You can also register to be an organ donor when you register to vote.

Remember that the mission of the League is to engage and encourage citizens to be active and informed voters. All local Leagues, MALS, and ILOs should be doing their part; together we can make a difference.

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

The state League Needs You! We are looking for volunteers for three different issues-related committees. Please email me (or Laura@lwny.org) with any questions about the committees.

If you have an interest in serving on the study committee for the **Legislative Procedures update**, please contact the state office (Katrina@lwny.org). The update would be focused on two aspects of our current position in particular, although it might consider other parts:

1. the reference to a part-time legislature
2. the ambiguous reference to length of terms.

A recent LWVUS announcement interpreted the Meeting Basic Human Needs position to permit state and local Leagues to lobby in support of raising state or local minimum wages or adopting a living wage position. The state League is forming a committee of League volunteers to look at the issue and possibly make a recommendation on a state minimum wage to the Board. For more information on the **minimum age concurrence**, contact Carol Mellor, Grassroots Lobby director (Carolmellor140@gmail.com).

We are also forming a **long-range program planning committee** to look at the last decade or two of program planning, what studies and updates were undertaken, and analyze the effort involved and the results. Please email or call the state office (Katrina@lwny.org or 518-465-4162) if you are interested in serving on either committee.

Grassroots Lobby Director: Carol Mellor, carolmellor140@gmail.com

The delegates at the state Convention agreed to engage our members in a concurrence on the issue referred to as "Raise the Age." New York is the only state other than North Carolina that prosecutes ALL youth 16 years of age and older as adults. LWV Ohio conducted a full study and several updates on the issue of Juvenile Justice and arrived at Juvenile Justice positions. Paramount in their positions is the principle that children under the age of 18 are not adults and "their treatment within the juvenile justice system should relate to their stage of development", that the purpose of juvenile justice should be rehabilitation, and that the legal rights of juveniles should be protected. We will be asking members to concur with some, but not all, of the OH position.

By mid-August, we will distribute materials, including a Powerpoint presentation, articles, etc, on this issue. We ask that each local League schedule a meeting **during the Fall 2015** to present the materials

and ask members to concur with the OH position. The results will be due into the state office by January 1 so that if agreement is reached, we can lobby on this new position during the next legislative session. Include this concurrence in your calendar for a Fall meeting.

Membership Report

TIME TO THINK BIG!!!

Your State Membership team would like to talk to each local League about its aspirations for this coming year. This will help the Membership Committee assist your League and also help us all share our experiences with one another.

We encourage you to discuss the following at your next board meeting:

If you had the necessary resources of money and people, what would **your League** like to accomplish that is beyond the daily routines of your portfolios. Some examples could be:

1. Establish a website with a competent web master or establish a social media presence OR
2. Increase your visibility within your area that includes building a relationship with new media outlets or with other like-minded organizations OR
3. Make an impact in your community during the 2015 election season OR
4. Acquire an intern or part-time clerk to help with ____? OR
5. Develop a professionally-designed membership brochure OR
6. [your goal]_____

Our team will begin contacting each League by the middle of September. We all look forward to a great year working together with you in Making Democracy Work!

Submitted by Georgia DeGregorio (Board Member-st-Large/Membership Specialist), Dare Thompson (Board President) Terri Parks (Board Member/Regional Director), and Lisa Scott (Off-Board Membership and Leadership Development Coordinator)

League Connections Lead to....

Social Media Hints, Insights and Tools for Action

Local Leagues have each other, as well as LWVNY and LWVUS people, to learn from and exchange ideas. Each month, we hope to highlight one of these sharing and learning experiences...

Discussions at the Suffolk County ILO board retreat in mid-July led to an informative, thought provoking conference call for three of the ILO's local League social media specialists with a LWVUS resource person.

LWV Brookhaven's Marilyn Beard, LWV Hamptons' Judy Samuelson and LWV Huntington's Brenda Reiss spent an hour (on the phone) with Amy Hjerstedt, who had used social media to found a new local League (LWV of the Eastern Upper Peninsula in Michigan). Amy has since moved to the DC area, but her efforts are being continued in Michigan- she is an example of a League leader who is young, passionate, engaged in social media, and willing to share and work with others.

Amy led the hour-long telephone discussion on Facebook/topics such as: Experience with Facebook; What are you using it for; What do you want it to be; Where do you go from here: Promotion; One Small Thing. The three local League call participants found the conversation a great way to learn from other levels of LWV and share best practices that get results- and now have new ideas to try to increase their local League's visibility on social media and in the community.

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

Voter Guide Part I

Voter Guide Part I is still available although supply is limited. Call the state office if you would like to order more copies. It is also posted on the state League website.

Organ Donation Program

There's still time to join the League's partnership with NY Alliance for Donation to increase voter and organ donor registrations through voter registration drives. Current participants have received their \$150 stipend and free and reduced cost Voter Guides. A package of materials, including fact sheets, brochures, posters, buttons, pens and more has also been shipped to all participating local Leagues.

Please remember that you did agree to complete the Tracking Form (attached here) for each voter registration drive. This is a research grant and the data from the drives is crucial to continuing with the grant. Contact Laura@lwny.org for more information on how you can join the effort.

100th Anniversary Activities

The state League has an intern, Lauren Thomas, in the office this summer helping to gather information on all activities, events and forums that will be held during the next 5 years to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in NYS (2017), 100th anniversary of State League (2019), and 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in US (2020). We hope to make plans to coordinate the League's activities with the other organizations across the state. If you know of plans in your communities, local organizations, or your own local League, please share them with us (email LaurenThomas830@gmail.com). We're creating a big calendar of the events that we'll share with all. We will also be creating a Committee to help plan and organize the state League events – if you or you know of someone who would like to work on this project, email Laura@lwny.org.

Vote 411

Many local Leagues should be busy organizing their Vote 411 websites. There are no statewide races this fall and no statewide ballot proposals, so all that is to be included in your Vote 411 would be the local races you select to include. If you have questions or problems, need help, etc, please contact Laura (Laura@lwny.org or 518-465-4162) for assistance. Vote 411 is our best visibility mechanism during the election season – especially for the public, not just our members!

Convention Workshops

Handouts from all of the Convention workshops are FINALLY posted on the state website – please share with leaders and members. There are great ideas and tips for all local Leagues! Sorry for the delay in posting them!

LWVUS Studies: Money in Politics and Constitutional Amendment Process

Webinar

Karen Wagner, LWV of Albany County, participated in the LWVUS webinar on these two studies. The webinar is going to be archived so anyone can view it; we'll share the link when it's available. She also, however, did a brief summary of key info from the webinar:

1. An Overview of Consensus discussion.
 - a. Submission will be electronic only.
 - b. Materials are on the League Management Site of lwv.org, much is already there, and the rest will be added incrementally as they have it.
 - c. Read over the Handbook on Successful Consensus Meetings
 - d. Time Keeper is a great role for a new member
 - e. This is not a vote!! It is about getting a sense of the members' views.
2. Constitutional Amendment Study - Pat (Committee: cacommitteechair@lwv.org)
 - a. The study has three parts:
 - (1) Part one: The Criteria for supporting or opposing a constitutional amendment
 - (2) Part two: Aspects of a constitutional convention: focusing on Article V: 2/3 of states need to request
 - (3) Part Three: Balance between League position - this is to be done last.
 - b. Due: December 1, 2015
 - c. One meeting can get it all done.
 - d. There are not many experts on the the process of amending the constitution. We are not trying to become the experts. We are just finding out what our members believe.
3. Money in Politics - Barbara Zia (Committee: mipcommitteechair@lwv.org)
 - a. Why? Our position predates important Supreme Court decisions. - ca 1974 revised 1982.
 - b. Supreme Court has focused on 1st Amendment with regards to free speech over campaign finance.
 - c. Materials -
 - (1) Meetings in a box under the LWV management section of their site.
 - (2) Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/lwv-money-in-politics>
 - d. Timeline:
 - (1) July 2015 - materials available gradually added. Read weekly League update.
 - (2) Fall 2015 - Consensus Materials available. (Early October)
 - (3) Due: February 1, 2016

Money in Politics Review Paper on Independent Expenditures is Online

The MIP paper on [Independent Expenditures](#) is now posted on the Money in Politics page. MIP: Independent Expenditures describes the history of independent expenditures and the evolution of regulations addressing them. It also examines recent trends in this type of spending and why it matters. A second link is also posted to the e-book entitled [The New Soft Money by Daniel P. Tokaji & Renata E. B. Strause](#). This book documents the effect of the new soft money on federal elections by

interviewing those directly involved with the system. A PowerPoint of [Professor Tokaji's presentation to Council 2015](#) can be found on the Convention and Council page.

Money in Politics Review PowerPoint is Now Online

[The Money in Politics \(MIP\) Review and Update PowerPoint](#) is a meeting-ready overview of money in politics issues for Leagues to use in meetings for members and the community. Along with “Meetings-in-a-Box,” and other materials posted on [the Money in Politics Review page](#), these resources are intended to engage members and the general citizenry on MIP issues as they are evidenced nationally and in states and communities. In addition, the PowerPoint and Meetings-in-a-Box will help prepare members for the LWV update of its campaign finance position. This update of the League’s position on campaign finance will get member understanding and agreement on the extent to which the League thinks that financing a political campaign is protected speech under the First Amendment. Want to be a part of the discussion, join the [MIP Google Group](#). Questions can be sent to MIPStudyChair@lwv.org.

Constitutional Amendment Study: Consensus Questions and New Deadline!

At its post-Council 2015 meeting, the League Board approved the [Constitutional Amendment study questions](#) so that Leagues can begin to meet and discuss this all important issue. LWVUS will be asking for the results of your consensus meetings by [December 1, 2015](#). The consensus questions are accompanied by short PRO and CON statements that will help League members consider their responses. Educational materials can be found at the [Constitutional Amendment Study page](#) and others will be posted in the coming weeks. This will be an interesting, exciting and important way to kick off fall activities for the League!