



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

July 2015



## From the State Office

The summer is flying by again! Many local Leagues take time off during the summer, but it really is a great time for planning.

This fall there are no statewide races and no statewide ballot proposals, so it is totally up to your local League as to what races to include in Vote 411 and what races to cover with candidate forums. Talk with your League leaders about what you think they should be covering - and help organize or staff a voter registration drive or candidate forum.

Vote 411 is alive and well, but only if your local League invites candidates to enter their information. This electronic voter guide is the best resource on race and candidate information for the public. Offer to help your local League contact candidates or advertise Vote 411. Tell your family, friends and co-workers to check out the Vote 411 website. For those in northeastern New York, Stewart Shops has agreed to post Vote 411 information on its milk cartons during the month of October!

Did you know that New York State is the only state that offers people the opportunity to register as an organ donor on the voter registration form? The State League has received a grant to help make the public aware of this opportunity. See if your local League is participating in this program. The goal is to increase both voter registrations and organ donor registrations. If successful, it could become a model for other states to use to increase both registrations.

Local Leagues will be organizing meetings this fall on three very important issues. The state League will be asking for member input on a concurrence regarding raising the age that individuals are treated as adults in the criminal justice system from 16 years old to 18 years old; currently, 16 and 17 year olds are considered adults. LWVUS is asking for input on two studies: the process by which the US constitution can be amended and the issue of money in politics. Offer to work with your local League in presenting these programs to your members.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and get ready for a busy fall election season!

Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director  
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## Leave a Legacy

Remembering a charity in your will is a wonderful way of ensuring that your values survive you. The LWVNYS Education Foundation has a special recognition society for people who have designated the League in their will. The 1919 Society was created in celebration of the state League's 90th birthday. Find out more about the 1919 Society [here](#).

Imagine what our country might look like if every eligible American was **registered to vote**



## Travel with the League



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

## VOTER SERVICES

Judie Gorenstein, [JudieL728@aol.com](mailto: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?

Contact the state office at 518-465-4162 if you would like to participate in a teleconference on this issue.

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.

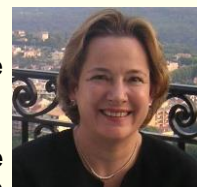
Remember that the mission of the League is to engage and encourage citizens to be active and informed voters. All local Leagues, MALS, and ILOs should be doing their part; together we can make a difference.

## ISSUES AND ADVOCACY

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

### The State League Needs You!

We are looking for volunteers for three different issues-related committees. Please email me (or [Laura@lwwny.org](mailto:Laura@lwwny.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@lwwny.org](mailto:Katrina@lwwny.org)). The update would be focused on two aspects of our current position in particular, although it might consider other parts:

- the reference to a part-time legislature
- 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](mailto: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@lwvny.org](mailto:Katrina@lwvny.org) or 518-465-4162) if you are interested in serving on either committee.

## GRASSROOTS LOBBY DIRECTOR

Carol Mellor, [carolmellor140@gmail.com](mailto: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 Ohio 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 Ohio 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.

## FROM THE STATE LEAGUE OFFICE

Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director, [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org)

### Convention Handouts

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!

### 100<sup>th</sup> 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 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote in NYS (2017), 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of State League (2019), and 100<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org).

## LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS

LWV of Buffalo/Niagara organized its annual potluck summer lunch at which they discussed the LWVUS study on Money in Politics. Janet Massaro, chair of the Money in Politics committee presented the information. Included was a "Ted" talk from Lawrence Lessig introducing his book, *Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress - and a Plan to Stop It*.

The Health Committee of LWV of Schenectady spent much of its time and attention this year on issues related to aging and on the New York Health Act which describes a single payer health insurance plan for New Yorkers. We invited Laurie Bacheldor from Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services and Ann DiSaro, consultant in aging services, to present "Aging in a Changing Landscape of Services and Resources- Challenges and Opportunities". Collaborating with AAUW, Schenectady County Retired Teachers, the Jewish Community Center and the Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services brought out a sizable audience and enthusiasm for the program.



From LWV of Oneonta: "On July 18, 2015 our league attended the Oneonta Branch of the NAACP "Community Picnic in the Park." We enjoyed working together to enable a Voter Registration Drive. Visitors to our site were pleased with the help, so thanks to the many volunteers. But a special thank you goes to our Alice Collins for her creativity and persistence in developing this opportunity."

From LWV of Huntington: "Our environmental committee is extremely proud of our accomplishments over the last several years. The first issue we tackled was HydroFracking. We produced a brochure that educated the public about this procedure to extract methanol, commonly called natural gas, and ran programs at local libraries and at the Cinema Arts Centre, using two movies, "An Inconvenient Truth" and "Gasland"."

The Nassau County League ILO (Inter-League Organization) held its Convention on June 4th, at Jonathan's Restaurant in New Hyde Park. After the business part of the meeting, during which the annual budget was accepted and the new board was elected, the attendees had the opportunity to hear from newly elected Congressmember Kathleen Rice, who shared some of her experiences as a freshman member of Congress. She explained how she is learning to negotiate the ins and outs of national politics.

The special guests at the annual meeting of LWV of East Nassau were **Brian Herman**, the student sent to the LWV of NYS **Students Inside Albany** conference, and his family. After being introduced by Lorraine Newman, Brian spoke about his experiences in Albany. His inspiring speech can be read in its entirety on our website: [www.lwvofeastnassau.org](http://www.lwvofeastnassau.org).

On an evening in June, approximately 50 interested community residents attended the LWV of the Hamptons public information meeting titled "Drinking Water-- Faucet, Filtered or Bottled--Informed Choices" at Southampton Hospital's Parrish Memorial Hall. The event was a joint collaboration between the LWVH Health and Natural Resource Committees.

LWV of Huntington honored its two amazing Students Inside Albany winners, Alexis Darrow and Julia Canigiani, at its annual dinner. Pictured with them are: JoAnn Raia, Town Clerk, JoAnn Alario-Paulson and Judie Gorenstein.



LWV of Rochester is proud that it is now recording its excellent monthly forums and posting them on their own You-Tube channel. They're available for viewing at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiC9NCupn9AhZpH2k83m5\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiC9NCupn9AhZpH2k83m5_g)

From LWV of Tompkins County: "In April some of the Board members met with Bruce Estes, Managing Editor of the Ithaca Journal. He wants us to write a Guest Viewpoint article each month in addition to our Letters to the Editor. The Journal realizes the importance of our work in Tompkins County. In response to his invitation, Sarah Jane Blake wrote an article on healthcare in May. This month Kay Wagner and her committee will write an article addressing natural resources and our endeavors to keep them safe from destruction."

In July, the LWV of Somers held a meeting entitled, "Elder Abuse: The Astor Case" with speaker, Elizabeth Loewy, former chief of the Elder Abuse Unit-Manhattan District Attorney's Office.

Don't forget to send your bulletins to the list serve at [localleaguebulletineditors@lwvny.org](mailto:localleaguebulletineditors@lwvny.org) and your photos to the state League office to get included in the next State Voter!

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