



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: September 2015

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

- Complete and return 2016 Legislative Priorities Form **by November 20, 2015.**
- Complete and return 2015 Voter Services Activities Survey **by December 11, 2015.**
- 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) and US Constitutional Amendment Process (due Dec. 1)
- Distribute registration form and register to attend League Day at the United Nations on **Dec. 3, 2015**
- Email Katrina@lwvny.org to sign up to participate in state committees on legislative procedures update, minimum wage or program planning (see Issues and Advocacy report)

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

While I like to think we have always paid a lot of attention to our local Leagues, this year we intend to ramp this attention up even higher. We do this not only because local Leagues support us with their PMPs (thank you!) but even more importantly because local Leagues make the LWV a truly grassroots organization.

I trust you know that most advocacy organizations would kill for the network of bright and capable people we have. I think we all believe that the health of our democracy depends upon it. Just imagine the U.S. and N.Y. without our voices! We need our precious grassroots to remain strong.

Thanks to the LWVUS Membership and Leadership (MLD) program, we are blessed with regular interaction with three LWVUS Shur Fellows - Amy Hjerstedt (DC) and Deborah Macmillan (NJ) and Georgia DeGregorio (NY) - and also with LWVUS board member (and Membership Chair) Anne Schink. We also have the help of off-board MLD coordinator Lisa Scott of Suffolk Co. and MLD coaches scattered about the state,

Helping strengthen us too are Inter League Organizations (ILOs) on Long Island and in Westchester and a system of regional calls elsewhere that keep us in touch with one another in our corners of the state. In the past few years, we have revived regional training sessions which allow you to see as well as hear one another and have some social time. And we now have conference calls - like the one

coming up with Judie Gorenstein on candidate forums - that allow you to learn from us and one another. (Stay tuned for one with Amy who's on the LWVUS Young People's Task Force!)

With the help of fellow board members (particularly Georgia and Terri Parks). Lisa Scott and I are trying to make sure the rich blessings of the MLD program reach all of you even if you don't have an MLD coach. As we warned you in the last two SBUs, we'll be calling you to hear what Big Dreams you have for your Leagues!

And of course Laura Ladd Bierman and the rest of the office staff are always ready to help you too. Many of you have benefited from visits by Laura and/or legislative director Barb Bartoletti. And just this weekend our development specialist, Kate Jankowski, traveled with me to Utica-Rome and to the Rivertowns in Westchester to hear from - and enjoy! - many of you. Kate is full of great fundraising info and she welcomes your questions by phone and email (kate@lwny.org) as well as in person at YOUR League.

So USE us, USE us, USE us (I'm getting to be a broken record) and we'll all strengthen NY together.

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

This is an extremely busy time for voter service and we on the state level are looking at ways we can help the local Leagues, which is why we sent out a brief voter service survey this fall. I want to thank the twenty one local Leagues and ILOs who responded to the survey. Twenty of them are holding one or more meet the candidates nights or candidate forums this year. Only one League has not yet decided if they will hold one. LWV of Long Beach has held a primary election candidates forum with a standing room only crowd and received some criticism for not having taped it. They are looking for advice on taping their next one for the general election. In fact, sixteen of the Leagues responding to the survey, indicated they would like a teleconference on holding a successful candidates night. Therefore, we have arranged a **teleconference on Monday Sept 28 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.** League members have received announcements of the teleconference under "LWVNYS Update on Issues: Candidates Debates" advising them not only of the date, time, and dial in information, but asking that they RSVP and indicate topics they would like covered. As of this date, 25 people have responded they will be participating. Prior to the call, participants will be receiving a power point presentation focusing on the role of the moderator, a key to a successful debate and one with which Leagues have struggled. It is our hope that participants will range from those with the most experience in running successful candidates nights to ones that either are struggling or have never held one. We can all learn from one another.

The survey also indicated Leagues' concern with visibility and turn out. The LWV-Suffolk County ILO has arranged for signs inside buses (see attached example) and the LWV of Huntington has been distributing flyers throughout the town informing voters of the deadline of Oct. 9 for voter registration, change of address or change of party. These signs will be put on the LWVNYS webpage and already some Leagues are using the idea. If your League has a way to be VISIBLE, please email it to either judiel728@aol.com or laura@LWVNY.Org.

LWVNYS continues to provide local Leagues with updated information. We have just completed revisions to First Vote. Vote 411 is being listed as a site to go to for information on candidates and elections. The DMV web site has been added as a place online where you can register to vote or reregister to change party, address, etc, as long as DMV has your signature on file. In addition, we clarified that when person is discharged from prison and parole, they need to reregister to vote. The updated First Vote is currently being reprinted and will be available next week.

Finally, after November 3 Election Day, we'd like to hear about all of your voter service activities you accomplished this fall. Please complete and return the 2015 Voter Services Survey (attached so you can start keeping track now, if it's easier) **by December 11, 2015**. Here is your time to boast about all the great activities you accomplished!

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

2016 Legislative Agenda and Legislative Priorities Response Form

Now is the time for your local League to have input on the state League's 2016 advocacy in Albany. Last year we debuted a new Legislative Agenda document for distribution: a booklet with more information on each of the main issues that we monitor. With this new approach, we believe that members, the public and legislators are able to see the full breadth of issues (rather than the few listed on the former Legislative Agenda brochure) that we are monitoring, even if we don't expect to accomplish all of these during this session.

The state board still needs and wants your input on our lobbying priorities. Please discuss with your members and board their suggestions and concerns – what are the issues that they want the state League to lobby this coming legislative session. **Complete and return the Legislative Priorities Form (attached) by November 20**. Once we have responses from the local Leagues, our Issue Specialists will consider them and make recommendations to the Board, but as always League resources and the evolving politics of issues will also influence our goals for the session. Please make sure your local League shares its opinions with us now!

We are also looking for volunteers for three different issues-related committees. Please email me (or Laura@lwvny.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@lwvny.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 **living wage concurrence**, contact Barb Thomas at barb.lwv@nycap.rr.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 or 518-465-4162) if you are interested in serving on either committee.

Advocacy Training/Lobby Day

This year we are going to combine our annual advocacy training day with an actual lobby day! Save the date of **Tuesday, April 26**, to come to Albany. 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!

Taking Action on a National Issue

We often get questions from local Leagues and members who want to take action on a national issue or piece of legislation. Here is a reminder of the process that is required to do that:

Taking action at the federal level requires prior approval by LWVUS. Even though you've worked with the organization for years, you would need permission. Contacting a Congressman or Senator, even your own, in the name of the League has to be approved first. This is to ensure that we are all speaking with one voice. The only exception is if LWVUS issues an Action Alert and asks you to contact your federal representatives.

Here's a link to the form to complete to get permission:

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/state-and-local-league-request-form-federal-issues>

You can also contact Jessica Jones (jjones@lwv.org) or Betsy Lawson (Blawson@lwv.org) at LWVUS with questions or for more info.

Transportation: Gladys Gifford, schuford@earthlink.net

A significant bill to change how transit infrastructure and operations is funded by NYS was introduced in June, 2015, by Senator DeFrancisco (Syracuse) and Assemblyman Brennan (Brooklyn), bill S5967/A8242. The major feature of the bill, "Transit/Transportation Investment Legislation", offers a steady and increasing stream of revenue for the capital needs of transit and transportation infrastructure. The source of this revenue is a small percentage of the NYS personal income tax.

The bill will not in any way change the personal income tax rate. Rather, a small portion of the existing tax revenues would be redistributed to the transportation systems all across the state, for use in transit and transportation agencies. Revenue would stay in the area where generated, i.e., downstate revenues would benefit the MTA and its suburbs; upstate revenues would benefit transit agencies and the DOT.

The bill has a handful of co-sponsors in each house. The Senate version now sits in the Finance committee; the Assembly version sits at Ways and Means. This bill will be in the stack of legislation that greets the Legislature in January. What can we do now to move this bill forward? The best way is to convince our legislators across the state to be co-sponsors. At the Buffalo/Niagara LWV, we have succeeded with two legislators and are happy that one of our senators was an original sponsor.

To view the legislation, go to: <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/A8242-2015>. More info on this bill is available at New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA) website, nytransit.com. Action: visit legislators now and urge them to sign on as co-sponsors for Bill S5967/A8242

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.

Materials, including a Powerpoint presentation, articles, etc, have been emailed to all local Leagues. 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.

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

League Day at the United Nations: Thursday, Dec. 3

The state League is pleased to offer its annual League Day at the United Nations on Thursday, December 3, 2015. This year’s briefings will cover two topics: **Global Healthcare Issues and Educating the Youth of the World**. The briefings this year will be held in the morning, from 10:00-12 noon, followed by lunch in the Delegates’ Dining Room and optional tours of the UN in the afternoon. The registration form is attached and also available online at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/INvmPPc4Hpebf0PLNzaRnw. Please copy and paste the link onto your own local League website and make copies of the registration form available for members at your local meetings.

Organ Donation Program

To the 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@lwvny.org for more information on how you can join the effort.

Jennifer Wilson, Director of Program and Policy

We are pleased to welcome Jennifer Wilson to the state office staff in the position of Director of Program and Policy. Jennifer moved to Albany three years ago for a legislative internship with the New York State Assembly. She is in her last semester of the MPA Program at the Rockefeller School of Public Affairs and Policy on track to graduate in December. Her last position was with the office of Senator Charles Schumer where she served as the Deputy Regional Director of his Albany office after working as the Albany Staff Assistant. Jennifer will be working with Barbara Bartoletti in the spring

on many legislative issues, but also is becoming trained on Vote 411 and will be developing new studies and program materials for the state and local Leagues. Her email is jennifer@lwny.org.

IRS 990N Postcard Filing

This is just a reminder that if your local League fiscal year ended in June 2015 you will need to file the 990N Postcard **by November 15th**. On the League website, lwny.org under Local League Resources on the left, go to In League. Scroll down to the Raising Money section and you will find the 990N Postcard link.

http://www.lwny.org/LLresources/inLeague/2013/UpdatedInstructions-%20990-N_62013.pdf

Each local League has an id and password and if you are a new treasurer please check with the outgoing treasurer for that information. Please contact Lisa at the state office (lisa@lwny.org) if you have any trouble and she can walk through it with you.

LWVUS Publication

“Electing the President”

The LWVEF has once again teamed up with the Newspaper in Education Institute (NIE) to produce [“Electing the President,”](#) a comprehensive supplement designed to help voters, especially young and first-time voters, understand the presidential election process. Leagues are encouraged to reach out to [participating local newspapers](#) and request that they run the insert and/or make copies available to local schools. In order to cover costs associated with printing the insert, the local newspaper may want you to collaborate with them in fundraising from local businesses or foundations. You may also [download the PDF here](#) and print copies for use at voter service events.

LWVUS Studies: Money in Politics and Constitutional Amendment Process

The State League would like to offer to help local Leagues who want to complete these consensus programs. Please email Laura (Laura@lwny.org) if you have a study group working on EITHER of these consensus topics and if you plan on presenting the info at a membership meeting. We may ask you to allow members from neighboring Leagues to join you! Let’s help as many members as possible join in the discussion on these important topics.

Money in Politics Materials

The [Money in Politics Introduction and Overview paper](#) is now posted. This paper provides a comprehensive overview of the existing LWV position on Campaign Finance, the proposed update, League action on Campaign Finance, the purpose of a campaign finance system and why Money in Politics matters to the League of Women Voters. Newly posted is a [brief background paper](#) (2 pages) on the current LWVUS Money in Politics Review and Update. This short paper provides key points of the MIP Review including scope of work, timeline, current position, background and history. Feel free to use this paper as a handout for your MIP events, as notes for an introduction to an event, as talking points, or as a newsletter article. For additional information, please contact Barbara Zia, MIP Committee Chair at MIPCommitteeChair@lwny.org.

Constitutional Amendment Study Materials

Subscribe to the newly-formed Yahoo group to discuss the League Constitutional Amendment Study and share information with other League members. To subscribe, send an email message to this address: lwvconamend-subscribe@yahogroups.com. You will receive an email back inviting you to join the discussion group. Follow the instructions in this email and you will be signed up for the CA discussion group. Be sure to check out [the Constitutional Amendment page](#) on the LWV web site, which includes the Study Guide, Consensus Questions and background materials. Questions can be sent to Pat Donath, CACommitteeChair@lwv.org.