



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: April 2016

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

- Schedule meetings with your local Legislators in May in his/her district office.
- Register for State League Lobby Day on May 10 in Albany.
- Email Jennifer@lwvny.org to confirm your League's participation in Vote 411
- Register for LWVUS Convention, June 16-19, 2016 (<http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention/convention-2016>)

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

Whew! April 19th has come and gone (along with the presidential candidates) and now we're left with outrage about **purged voters, poorly trained workers at many polling sites**, and - on clear display this year - our **very restrictive NY election laws**. Finally *everyone* could see how wrong it is that if you want to change your party affiliation you had to think to do that last October! And don't get us started on how tight a grip the two major parties have on every other aspect of our voting as well.

But what an opportunity this presents to all of us to speak out in all media about these issues! We will be sending out a sample letter that you can use. We hope you're gathering local statistics you can use as well. Don't hesitate to send us stories from your polling places right away. They'll really help us round out our picture of what happened across the state.

And **while voters are frustrated, encourage them to join the League** and work with you and us to make NY's elections more open and fair and to increase voter turn-out.

The election happened only days after our last two **regional meetings** in Syracuse and Buffalo and we thank the local Leagues who helped make these a success. You came full of energy and many reported going home even more energized, and those of us from "State" loved seeing and hearing all of you. Hearing about **Albany battles** and from the **Con Con and organ donation** speakers and participating in the discussions on **getting out the vote**, the **Centennial** of the vote for women, and having **FUN** were highlights for many.

But best of all for all of us is just the opportunity to connect with one another and swap stories. We'll see what you all say when we send out a survey. Meanwhile you can check the www.lwvny.org for links to the handouts we shared.

I hope to see many of you **in Albany on May 10 for Lobby Day** and at the **LWVUS Convention in Washington, DC in mid-June**. There's more on these elsewhere in this SBU.

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

Primary Day was here and is over. The regional workshops are over. The LWNVNYVOTERSERVICES google group has begun; contact me if you want to join the discussion. What have we learned? What do we need to do? What is it we want to accomplish this year in voter services throughout our state?

The regional workshops on candidates nights and getting out the vote showed that our local Leagues are striving to have successful candidates nights and understand the importance of having a comprehensive written policy that can be publicized and sent to candidates. Leagues are also looking at new ways to get out the vote and are willing to try out new ideas and think outside of the box. Leading up to and on Primary Day, we learned from the many phone calls to the Leagues that many citizens were unaware or confused about our closed primary system. We also learned that many wanted to vote for the very first time in a primary and were upset that they could not if they were not enrolled in a party. Surprisingly on Long Island, I learned that many people who called were upset that they had not received any information in the mail or on the phone about the primary. I say surprisingly because in Suffolk County, many of us participated in making phone calls for the pilot project to inform people about the primary and our major concern was that they would have been inundated with calls. It is too early to learn the result of this pilot project, but we did find out that our League volunteers were up to the task and did call the entire list. The day after the primary, we learned that turn-out was higher than usual for a primary, but as our local newspaper stated, "The bar is very low."

So what do we need to do? We certainly need to continue to educate voters. We have the information on primaries as well as general elections. It is on our state and local websites. It is in our pamphlets and voters guide. We include information in our local Voters and on palm cards, facebook, etc. Some of us have written letters to the editors. What else can we do? Any new ideas? Share them. The google group that we have been promising you on voter services is now up. Initially it was to discuss candidates nights and getting out the vote. We can also share ways to help educate and engage citizens on election law. Let's not lose this opportunity when so many people have shown interest. If not now when? All League presidents and voter service chairs will be receiving an invitation to join our google group. Certainly all other members are encouraged to join. Together we can accomplish!

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

Advocacy Training/Lobby Day: May 10 in Albany

Come learn about our advocacy agenda, hear directly from the Issue Specialists about our expected action for the 2016 Legislative Session and lobby your own legislators!

10am - 1pm Presentations by Issue Specialists (election reform, women's issues, ethics, financing education, transportation, healthcare and more)

1 pm - 2:30 pm Members lobby own legislators
(appointments made by attendees in advance)

3 pm – 5 pm Observe Senate and Assembly in Session

Location: Cornerstone at the Plaza, Empire State Plaza (former Sign of the Tree Restaurant)

Registration form is attached or you can register online at:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/i_ELcAUOhYyrY6YYjXp0g

2016 Legislative Packet

The 2016 Legislative Packet has been mailed (paper copy) to the President or one Co-President of each local League; it was also emailed to all Presidents and Co-Presidents. A copy is also attached to this email and is available on the homepage of the state website.

We are asking local Leagues to set up appointments with their local legislators to lobby for League issues during May, if you haven't done so during the legislative recess these past two weeks. If more than one local League is covered by the member, please try and coordinate to have as many Leagues involved as possible.

These meetings are very important and they give the legislators an opportunity to learn about League positions from their constituents. Ask for ½ an hour, but be willing to take less and seeing a staff person is fine. After the lobbying is completed, please **return the attached form asap (by June 1)** with the comments from your legislators on each issue.

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

Regional Training Workshops

Almost 200 people attended the regional training workshops held in 4 locations across the state. The handouts and presentation materials are all posted on the state website (<http://www.lwny.org/training/index.html>) – feel free to reprint and use in your own training or education. The presentations by the speakers on the 2017 ballot proposal for a constitutional convention were each very different so be sure to check them out and learn something new in each one!

Vote 411 for 2016

The state League is again paying the license fee for all local Leagues in NYS to utilize Vote 411; we are again asking each local League to confirm participation and pay a \$25 administrative fee. Please confirm to Jennifer@lwny.org if your local League is participating and who the contact for Vote 411 will be. We are beginning to plan for next elections which will be the Congressional and US Senate primary races (if there are multiple candidates) in June.

Organ Donor Registration Program

Stipends are Announced – Money for your Local League!

Local Leagues will begin receiving their stipends this week for submitting Tracking Forms after voter registrations drives and for coordinating efforts with the regional Organ Procurement Organizations (OPO). There is also money available if you have a new location for a registration drive and you have to pay a fee or rent a table – just ask and we'll see how we can help! **JUST REMEMBER THAT THE IMPORTANT TASK IS TO COMPLETE A TRACKING FORM (attached) FOR EACH VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE THAT YOU ORGANIZE.** The materials are also available now, including more posters, banners, pens, buttons, brochures and fact sheets. Just contact Katrina (518-465-4162 or katrina@lwny.org) and tell her how many of which you'd like mail to you – they are all free (part of the grant)!

If your local League isn't participating yet and you'd like more information, contact Laura at 518-465-4162 or by email at laura@lwny.org.

LWVUS Updates

LWVUS Convention, June 16-19, 2016, Washington, DC

Now is the time to register for the LWVUS Convention to be held June 16-19 in Washington, DC. This is an exciting way to learn more about the League, reconnect with old friends, and actively mold the shape, money and action of LWVUS. To see how many delegates your local League is entitled to, to register and more, go to the website at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention/convention-2016>. There is also a google group for discussion of the upcoming Convention; join the conversation here:

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/join-conventionprogram-planning-google-group>