



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: February 2016***

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

- Advertise Regional Training locations and dates to your members; registration form is attached.
- Submit forms of student selected to attend SIA to state office **by March 1**.
- Email [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org) to confirm your League's participation in Vote 411
- Complete and return order form for Voter Guide Part I asap.

#### **President's Report/Membership Report: Dare Thompson, [darethompson@gmail.com](mailto:darethompson@gmail.com)**

I am really looking forward to seeing many of you at the Saturday **Regional Meetings** in NYC (on 3/5), Round Lake (3/12), Syracuse (4/2) and Buffalo (4/9). A wide variety of topics will be covered, and we hope that all of them will help you connect even better with your communities, get more comfortable asking for what you need, and have FUN.

Voter service, issues and advocacy, fundraising, and visibility will be included. But we also will hear from extremely knowledgeable speakers on NY's possible Constitutional Convention and we'll get updates from our organ donation partners in voter registration - who are also paying for our lunches!

Meanwhile, in Albany, we are continuing to represent your views with your state legislators and if you go to [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org) you'll see just how busy your state League has been. The focus right now is on the budget so most of our testimony and memos have related to that, but you'll see that we're always talking about more than just money.

A particularly exciting day for several of us (along with our friends at NYPIRG, Common Cause, and Citizens Union) was participating in a recent WAMC radio interview with **US Attorney Preet Bharara** whose office has had great attention recently for convicting Assembly Speaker Silver and Senate Majority Leader Skelos. His remarks were down-to-earth, inspiring, and occasionally quite humorous. He called on everyone to speak up and to insist on honest government. "People had to know," he pointed out.

I don't usually try to get my picture with VIPs but I made a special effort to get one for on our website's homepage. Click [here](#) to listen to the interview. Bharara has opened up an opportunity in our capital that I dearly hope we can maximize. And I hope his determination inspires us to insist on better at all levels of government.

## **Voter Services Report: Judie Gorenstein, [JudieL728@aol.com](mailto:JudieL728@aol.com)**

### **Can People Vote in the Presidential Primary?**

There has been much confusion about the rules for people to vote in the presidential primary which will be held on April 19 in NYS. People CANNOT change their party affiliation now and vote in the primary of their new affiliation this April. **Anyone who is registering FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A COUNTY may vote in the presidential primary**; they must register in person by March 25 or in mail postmarked by March 25 and be received by the county BOE by March 30. Anyone who has not registered in their county, moved to new county or moved into NYS from out-of-state, may register in their county and vote in the primary. People with questions can contact their own county board of elections. A calendar with all the deadlines and dates is posted on our website.

Thanks to the 32 Leagues who have completed the voter service surveys ( 4 Leagues have sent them in this month) LWVNY has a good idea of not only what your League has done last year, but what guidance you are looking for now. In March, all members will be invited to join a voter service google group. All our members, not only our boards or voter service committees should be involved in engaging and educating voters. In March and April at our regional training meetings, we are offering two workshops to deal with concerns most Leagues have expressed. One will focus on candidate forums and among other things will provide information on setting the written policy for your debates/forums. The Road to the Voting Booth Part II (on the state website under Voter Services at: [http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/vote/2011/RVB-PartII\\_0411.pdf](http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/vote/2011/RVB-PartII_0411.pdf)) clearly states what FEC regulations MUST be followed for candidates in federal elections and although we strongly suggest having the same policy for all candidates, there is leeway for state and local elections. Learn what you CAN and CANNOT do. Hear how other Leagues have resolved some issues. Several Leagues have been working diligently on establishing a clear, well written comprehensive policy which will be distributed at the workshop. Your policy provides the foundation for your candidates' night. This year, with four elections including three primaries and some special elections, there will be many opportunities to have candidate nights. With our nonpartisan policy and our excellent reputation for running debates/candidates night, it is important that we do it right. If not us, then who?

A second workshop at the regional training meetings will focus on Get Out The Vote. We have all been frustrated by the low voter turnout. With all the media attention and interest on the presidential primaries, this year is an excellent time to engage people, especially our youth. The LWV of Huntington already has begun voter registration drives at local colleges and were stricken by the positive reception we received, with many of the college students thanking us for coming and completing forms immediately. One surprise was that more than half of them registered for a party, eager to vote in the presidential party, whereas in the past, the majority wanted to be unaffiliated. Where and when is your League holding their drives? Once you register people how likely are they to vote? What can be done to turn out the vote? Although LWVUS recommends follow up contact with people you registered, and studies have shown that it takes three reminder follow up contacts to get new voters to the polls, many of our local Leagues are adverse to this activity. Are there things we can and are willing to do? Hear what has been tried in other countries as well as our own. The LWVUS is beginning a pilot project with robo calls being made to all voters in a particular

assembly district. The LWV of Brookhaven and LWV of Mid Hudson have been chosen and are considering to participate in this pilot project. Learn about this at the workshop. Come and participate. Be informed so you can inform others. This is a year when we should be able to increase turnout. If not now, when?

### **Issues and Advocacy Report: Sally Robinson, [robintwins@gmail.com](mailto:robintwins@gmail.com)**

During the last month, the state League has submitted testimony to 5 different budget committee hearings; view each testimony on the homepage of the state website ([www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)). Visit the state website every day to see what new action has been taken. Also, watch for updates on Capitol Beat, a blog written by Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNYS Legislative Director, and Jennifer Wilson, LWVNYS Director of Policy and Program, on “happenings” at the state Capitol; it’s updated every week, usually on Thursday. The link is on the state website and here: <http://www.lwvny-capitolbeat.blogspot.com>

### **Update on Legislative Procedures Position**

Delegates at the state League convention in June approved an update of our position on Legislative Procedures, dating back to 1997. (current position: <http://lwvny.org/advocacy/impact/issues/2013/LEGISLATIVE-PROCEDURES.pdf>) It will be focused on two aspects of the position in particular, although it might consider other parts: the statement in favor of a part-time legislature, and the ambiguous reference to length of terms.

Suzanne Stassevitch of the New York City League has agreed to chair the committee. It is not too late to contact Katrina McEwan at the League office ([katrina@lwvny.org](mailto:katrina@lwvny.org) or 518-465-4162) if you are interested in volunteering to be part of the committee.

*Please put a consensus meeting for this update on the fall 2016 calendar for your local League.* The material for the update should be available to local Leagues by the end of the summer. We would like to wrap this up by year-end so any updated position will be available for lobbying in the 2017 legislative session.

### **Legislative Agenda Booklets**

The 2016 Legislative Agenda booklet is now available. We have shipped copies to each local League based on your membership numbers. We also will sell additional copies and post it on the website. We hope that you will use this booklet in meetings with your legislators, but also as a membership tool with new and prospective members.

### **Advocacy Training/Lobby Day**

The date for this Advocacy Training and Lobby Day has been changed to **Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>**! 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!

## **From the State League Office: Laura Ladd Bierman, [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org)**

### **Regional Training Workshops**

**To register, complete and return form attached, register online at**

**[https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/1Z8RiqOqQSIzwMaEDlpS-Q](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/1Z8RiqOqQSIzwMaEDlpS-Q) or call state office.**

The League of Women Voters of NYS invites **all** members to come to training workshops being held throughout the state on **Saturdays from 10:00-4:00 in March and April**. All members are invited to attend any or all of the workshops. All local Leagues board members are **strongly** encouraged to attend at least part of the day. Lunch will be provided and will allow for informal networking among the attendees (no program). There is a \$5 charge to cover other expenses.

- **March 5, NYC** (4 West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, NYC)
- **March 12, Capital Region** (Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 2001 Route 9, Exit 10 on Rte 87, Round Lake)
- **April 2, Syracuse Area** (Liverpool Public Library, 310 Tulip St, Liverpool – near intersection of Rtes 90 and 81)
- **April 9, Buffalo Area** (Harlem Road Community Center, 4255 Harlem Rd, Amherst)

### **Tentative Discussions at Workshops**

Outside Experts/Academicians Discuss Constitutional Convention – Process, Timing and Potential Issues

Best Practices for Candidate Forums – Process, Policies and Organization

Programs, Issues and Activism – Local Programs that Have Had Influence in Our Communities

Creative Fundraising – and How to Use Women’s Suffrage and League Centennials to Raise Visibility and Money

Coordination with Organ Donor Organizations to Increase Voter and Organ Donor Registrations

Vote 411 Troubleshooting – Shared Advice and Learning Together

Get Out the Vote – Ways to Increase Voter Participation

Visibility, Diversity, Membership, Program and Money – All are Connected

### **Voter Guide Part I**

Based on the responses to the question as to whether or not local Leagues would like to have the Voter Guide Part I earlier this year because of the primaries, we will be publishing it as soon as possible. Those local Leagues who participate in the organ donor registration program will again receive up to 500 copies for free (see below if you’d like to participate in this program); complete and return the attached form indicating how many for free and, if more than 500, with payment for half price cost. Non-participating local Leagues may also order the Guide by completing and returning the attached registration form with payment to the state office.

### **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@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org) if your local League is participating and who the contact for Vote 411

will be. We will again offer training at the regional workshops in March and April and Jennifer from the state office is available for one-on-one training to any League member.

### **Voting, Primaries, Absentee Ballots and More in NYS**

The state League created a page on the website with key information on voting this election year in NYS. It includes information on the primaries, voting requirements and more. This document will be posted on the state website and can be shared by any local Leagues. The document is attached and also on the homepage of the website.

### **Organ Donor Registration Program**

The League is pleased to announce continuation of the partnership program with the New York Alliance for Donation (NYAD). The goal is that we can increase both voter registrations and organ and tissue donor registrations together! This year we have more incentives for local Leagues to participate. If you participated last year, just let us know that you'll continue; we'll send you more buttons, pens, factsheets, brochures and posters – hopefully you can reuse the beautiful banner we sent to you last year. Those new to the program can just watch a webinar or attend one of the regional training workshops (see above), and you'll receive all these benefits, too. **JUST REMEMBER THAT THE IMPORTANT TASK, HOWEVER, IS TO COMPLETE A TRACKING FORM (attached) FOR EACH VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE THAT YOU ORGANIZE.**

Based on last year's program, we have realized that the best results (most number of voter registration and organ donor registrations) were when the members from both organizations worked together at a registration drive. So, this year, a stipend will be available if you work with the organ donor organizations in your area to coordinate the drives. You'll also be eligible for a stipend for each Tracking Form that you complete and return; this will encourage you to organize more drives, as more drives will provide more stipends to your local League. Watch for details next week!

### **2016 Students Inside Albany Conference – May 22-25, 2016**

The forms to be completed by the student(s) selected by the local League have been emailed to all local Leagues, but also are attached here. These forms **MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE STATE OFFICE BY MARCH 1**. If the forms are not received by March 1, we cannot ensure that your student will be able to attend. Please remember, also, that the local League is responsible for arranging and paying for the student's transportation to and from Albany; the local League should talk with the student/parents as soon as the student is selected to make these arrangements.

### **Development: Kate Jankowski, [kate@lwny.org](mailto:kate@lwny.org)**

#### **League Direct Mail Annual Appeal**

The state League annual appeal for gifts will be mailed this week. It includes an update on our advocacy efforts so far this legislative session and asks people to support activities that cannot be funded through the EF—like advocacy, service to local Leagues, and leadership training for members. Please look out for the letter and make a gift to the League if you are able. Thank you.

### **Facebook Gifts**

Facebook now allows non-profits to link their online giving pages to their Facebook page. If you'd like to use that feature on your local League Facebook page, you can provide this link that allows for gifts to go directly to your grants management account in the Education Foundation:

[https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/LzxNifgwHedZPbpgOOCfBw](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/LzxNifgwHedZPbpgOOCfBw). Here is a link with instructions on how to add the Donate button to your local League Facebook page:  
<https://nonprofits.fb.com/topic/fundraising-tools/>

If you have any questions about this link or the process by which you get gifts through this service, please contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Director, at (518) 465-4162 or by email at [kate@lwny.org](mailto:kate@lwny.org).

### **Youth Programs: Judi Roth, [rothhandj@yahoo.com](mailto:rothhandj@yahoo.com)**

There are 4 Leagues in Suffolk County representing approximately 30 high schools. One of our county legislators, familiar with Students Inside Albany, asked us if we could run a similar program and bring students to the Suffolk County Legislature. Working with the Chief of Staff of the Presiding Officer, we developed a one-day visit that is described on the attached agenda. The program has been a great success that could easily be replicated by other Leagues in the state. Contact Judi for more information.