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# League of Women Voters of NYS

## STATE VOTER

February 2016



### From the President

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). See information on registration below. 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.

Dare Thompson, President  
League of Women Voters of NYS  
[darethompson@gmail.com](mailto:darethompson@gmail.com)  
Facebook: League of Women Voters of NYS  
Twitter: @LWVNYS

### IN THIS ISSUE

- [Voting Information and Dates](#)
- [Regional Training Workshops](#)
- [Issues and Advocacy](#)
- [Voter Services](#)
- [Youth Programs](#)
- [Local League News](#)

### Travel with the League



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

### VOTE 411



Vote 411 is live with candidate info for the Presidential Primaries. Go to [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) for information.

### SAVE THE DATE

#### Advocacy Training/Lobby Day

The date for Advocacy Training and Lobby Day in Albany is **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!

## DEVELOPMENT

## 1919 Society

### 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.

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](#). If you have included the League in your will or are considering making a bequest, please contact Kate Jankowski, Communications and Development Director, at (518) 465-4162 or [kate@lwvny.org](mailto:kate@lwvny.org).

## Presidential Primaries and More

### 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 by mail (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 and available [here](#).

LWVUS has also created a page with a wealth of info about the Presidential primaries around the US. Here's a link to this info - share it with friends. <http://lwv.org/blog/everything-you-need-know-about-presidential-primaries>



Vote 411 is live with information on the Presidential Candidates. Go to [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) and enter your address to get the information. Watch for later in the year as we update for each of the upcoming primaries and general election.

The state League is releasing its Voter Guide Part I earlier this year because of the many primaries in NYS. Watch for its availability on the state website and call the office if you'd like copies. We've also created a page on the website with some of the same information. Take a look [here](#).

## COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY 2016

### PRIMARY ELECTIONS

### PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY - TUESDAY, APRIL 19th

- Register in person by Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> and received by March 30<sup>th</sup>
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup> and received by Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>

## CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARY - TUESDAY, JUNE 28th

- Register in person by Friday, June 3rd
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, June 3rd and received by June 8th
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, June 27th
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, June 21st
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, June 28th
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, June 27th and received by Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>

## STATE AND LOCAL PRIMARY - TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th

- Register in person by Friday, August 19th
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, August 19th and received by August 24th
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, September 12th
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, September 6th
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, September 13th
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, September 12th and received by Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

## GENERAL ELECTION-TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8th

- Register in person by Friday, October 14th
- Register by mail: Postmarked by Friday, October 14th and received by October 19th
- Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, November 7th
- Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, November 1st
- Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, November 8th
- Deliver ballot by mail: postmarked by Monday, November 7th and received by Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>

## COME LEARN MORE ABOUT LEAGUE

### Regional Training Workshops

There's still time to register for the workshops. Registration form is [here](#), register online [here](#) or call Katrina at the state office (518-465-4162).

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 43rd 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

Registration form is [here](#) or call Katrina at the state office (518-465-4162)

## COME JOIN THE CONVERSATIONS! We'd like to hear from all of you.

### ISSUES AND ADVOCACY

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, LWVNY's Legislative Director, and Jennifer Wilson, LWVNY's 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. The current position is [here](#). 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.

### VOTER SERVICES

Judie Gorenstein, [Judiel728@aol.com](mailto:Judiel728@aol.com)

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, click [here](#)) 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?

## YOUTH PROGRAMS

Judi Roth, [rothhandj@yahoo.com](mailto:rothhandj@yahoo.com)

### Student Day at the Suffolk County Legislature

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 [here](#). The program has been a great success that could easily be replicated by other Leagues in the state. Contact Judi for more information.



## LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS



Seventy-five people attended the **White Plains League's** annual winter party. The party's guest of honor was Dorothy Schere with the Mayor of White Plains declaring January 31st Dorothy Schere day. Dorothy is long time member of the LWV of White Plains and consummate volunteer giving countless hours of her time and talent to the League. (photo: LWVWP President Janice Abbott with Dorothy Schere)

**LWV of Rochester Metro Area** recently sponsored a panel entitled *New York State Legislative Approaches to Fight Climate Change*. The expert panel included Carole Camp, member of the Citizens Climate Lobby, discussed A8372, the bill proposing a carbon tax in NYS, Sue Hughes-Smith, lecturer at RIT, discussed A7497, the bill to require 100% clean energy by 2030. Barbara Grosh, member of LWV-RMA and Mothers Out Front, discussed A7625, the bill relating to financial surety for major facilities, vessels, and railroads (Bakken oil). Melissa Peterson, member of Mothers Out Front, discussed A8011, the bill to require divesting the State's public pension funds from fossil fuels companies .

Meet America's Trailblazing First Woman, Helen "Nellie" Taft, at **LWV of Saratoga's** annual famous person fundraiser. For tickets, go to their website at: <http://www.lwvsaratoga.org/>



The afternoon of March 14<sup>th</sup> **LWV of Huntington** is co-sponsoring a very special program for Women's History Month, *Madam Justice: The Women of the US Supreme Court*. James Coll will present the program. In this lecture, will discuss the lives and some of the important decisions-- and dissents--that have been a part of the continuing legacy of the women of the Supreme Court.

Also coming up in the capital region, the Musicians of Ma'alwyck, Siena College and the **League of Women Voters of NYS** have joined forces to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's birth with the "Declaration of Sentiments" on March 20 at 3PM at Druthers Brewery in Albany. Music performed will be by American women composers and a special world premiere commissioned work for chorus, vocal soloists and string quartet. "Declaration of Sentiments", Elizabeth Cady Stanton's document on women's rights presented at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1948 will be read by WNYT's Anchor/Reporter ElaineHouston. To order tickets: go to <http://www.musiciansofmaalwyck.org/tickets/>



For their March 7th program, **LWV of Broome and Tioga Counties** will host a program on Criminal Justice Reforms. There will be four panelists, who are knowledgeable about the history of criminal justice systems and current proposals being considered by the Governor, legislature, and communities in the state and country.

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**LWV of Schenectady** held their Program Planning Potluck dinner on February 9th. Members enjoyed a potluck dinner followed by the program planning meeting. At the meeting they set goals for the upcoming year.

On the evening of March 15th the **LWV of East Nassau** will be presenting a talk on the Special Courts in Nassau County. District Court Judge Andrea Phoenix, who has been strongly involved in the special, problem solving, drug and mental health courts for years, will speak with us about the successes of these courts not only as alternatives to incarceration, but in helping people to re-build their lives.

The topic is "Legislation: Help or Hinder to Success of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities" at the March 9th **LWV of Chautauqua** luncheon. Their guest speaker will be Rhonda Frederick, CEO

and President of People Inc. People Inc. is nationally recognized provider for people with developmental disabilities.



A luncheon was held by the **LWV of Huntington** held to celebrate the 96th birthday of the League of Women Voters on February 14th with lots of bubbles!.

The **League of Women Voters of Nassau County** in Recognition of Women's History Month will host a buffet luncheon celebrating "Women in Media" on Sunday, March 13, 2016. Keynote speaker will be Joye Brown, a Newsday Columnist.

The **League of Women Voters of Saratoga County** will hold a public information forum on the topic of Common Core on Saturday, February 27, 2016 from 1 to 3 pm at the Clifton Park Halfmoon Library, Moe Road, Clifton Park. Panelists will include: Jay Worona, Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel for the NYS School Board Association, Dr. John Yagielski, School District Superintendent; Maria Neira, Past Vice President, NYS United Teachers, Bi-lingual teacher; and Mary Boyd Ratzer, Librarian, teacher trainer, educational author.

The **LWV of Scarsdale's** Money in Politics committee hosted an information meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> at the Scarsdale Library, with a comprehensive presentation on the evolution of U.S. campaign finance law over the past 100 years and the U.S. Supreme Court's systematic dismantling of that body of law over the last 10 years.



At their holiday party, **LWV of Buffalo Niagara** members enjoyed the comments about Vive Inc. and Jericho Road Community Health Center by Sister Beth Niederpruem, the social worker at Vive, and Anita Lakareber, a refugee from Uganda. They were both eloquent in sharing Vive's mission and their insights into the refugee experience.

League of Women Voters of New York State  
62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207  
Tel: 518-465-4162; FAX: 518-465-0812  
Website: [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)  
Email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org)  
Facebook: League of Women Voters of NYS  
Twitter: @LWVNYS