



The League of Women Voters of New York State  
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207  
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812  
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

### ***State Board Updates: November 2016***

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

- Update your roster in the LWVUS membership database regularly **from now until January 31, 2017** to ensure correct PMP billing for FY2017-18. Always include membership expiration dates. Contact Katrina at the state office at [Katrina@lwvny.org](mailto:Katrina@lwvny.org) or 518-465-4162 for help.
- Complete and return Voter Service Survey **by Nov. 30, 2016 (form attached)**
- Complete and return the 2017 Legislative Agenda Survey **by Dec. 1, 2016 (form attached)**
- Email, fax or mail your responses to the **Legislative Procedures Update by December 15**
- **Schedule a community forum/membership meeting in Jan or Feb, 2017**, to present program on constitutional convention and upcoming ballot proposal (see below for more info)
- Mark your calendar for **Lobby Day, April 25, 2017**, in Albany.
- Mark your calendar for **LWVNYS State Convention, June 9-11, 2017, in Liverpool, NY** (read more details below).

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

With recounts going on and who knows what else coming next, this year's presidential election may never end, but there is a silver lining to the turmoil and the concerns: People really need the League of Women Voters!

My local League had a Saturday morning meeting a week ago simply to talk about League issues and generate activities, and we were startled to have to turn people away! There were even some parents with young children in tow who were determined to be there even though it was in a cafe with no babysitting. I hear we're getting ten new or returning members from that event along - a big leap for us.

You may be experiencing the same thing. If so, please share your stories with me and I'll share them with all. Also tell me how you are helping people engage in ways that satisfy this yearning for positive and effective action. ***Let's try new things!***

Most Leagues have stopped having babysitting at meetings. Should we work with young families to establish a good time and place and re-institute the practice?

Might we establish meetings at a supportive local business that has a lunchroom we could use?

What about offering a gathering at a cafe or pizza place for a quick bite before a town or county board meeting to fill folks in on who the players are and what to listen for?

**What other ideas do YOU have on how to capture this renewed interest in government?** The presidential election has us all talking, but a new state legislature will be going into session in January, and our local bodies are going all year round. We need different strategies for all three levels.

As for me, while I lobby at all levels, I especially love how quickly I can make a difference locally. I'm renewing my own commitment to get to local meetings more often - and to offer rides! Next year *these* people will be up for re-election and too few people even know their names.

### **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dates**

November 6, 2017	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State
November 19, 2019	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of New York State
February 14, 2020	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National League of Women Voters
August 26, 2020	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the official certification of the ratification of the 19 <sup>th</sup> amendment by the US Secretary of State

### **LEAGUE'S STATE CONVENTION IS COMING!**

The 57<sup>th</sup> State League Convention is scheduled for June 10-11, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Express in Liverpool, NY (just off the Thruway near Syracuse). We will be sending out the registration kits in February. In the meantime, we need some help from our local Leagues and members.

### **Field Trip!**

To celebrate women achieving the right to vote in 1917 in NYS, the state League is organizing a field trip from Liverpool to Seneca Falls on Friday, June 9 (day before Convention actually begins). This is will a separate charge and everyone is welcome (not just convention attendees); tours of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton home, Women's Hall of Fame and the Women's Rights National History Park (and Wesleyan Chapel), as well as dinner and a speaker at an historic restaurant in Seneca Falls, will be included. You will need to be in Liverpool by noon on Friday to join this trip. Watch for more information in the registration kit.

### **Bylaws**

Attached are the bylaws as amended at the last State Convention in 2015. Please discuss and forward any recommended amendments by **February 20** to the state office ([Katrina@lwvny.org](mailto:Katrina@lwvny.org)).

### **Program Planning**

In a grassroots organization, it is vital that all members have the opportunity to participate. The League "Program" is determined by members and consists of federal, state and local issues. National issues are adopted at LWVUS Convention, state issues at LWVNYS Convention and local issues at local Leagues' annual meetings. This process provides every member an opportunity to influence new areas of study and the issues that will direct League action during the 2017-2019 League years.

A timetable and instructions are attached, as well as a summary of our current positions. Local Leagues should review this info and **MUST** respond by **February 20, 2017**, to retain or delete any positions,

and to recommend updates, new studies or concurrences. **Changes in Program cannot be suggested for the first time at Convention.**

### **Workshops**

Workshops will be organized for Friday evening, June 9, and Saturday morning, June 10. Please email the state office ([Katrina@lwvny.org](mailto:Katrina@lwvny.org)) with specific topics you would like us to offer as a workshop during Convention. Local Leagues and members can also offer caucuses or info sessions to share their own concerns or successes and times will be available for these also.

### **State Nominating Committee: Lisa Scott, Chair, [lisawscott@gmail.com](mailto:lisawscott@gmail.com)**

It's never too early to think about leadership... defining roles, evaluating performance and planning for the future. **We need your help!**

As your LWVNY 2017 Nominating Committee, our charge is to present a slate of officers/directors at Convention in Syracuse next year (June 2017).

If you, or anyone you might recommend from your local League are interested in knowing more about getting involved in the wonderful and productive group of state leaders we have, please get in touch.

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

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local Leagues, MALs and ILOs for their diligence in registering and educating voters as well as turning out the vote on November 8<sup>th</sup>. The good news is that New York is no longer one of the five lowest states in voter turnout. The data from the United States Election Project has New York above Hawaii which is the lowest, then Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah. Although this is not terrific, it does show improvement and I have to believe that all of our efforts in this area did make a difference. I also believe that our Leagues took their task of remaining nonpartisan seriously and, from some feedback I have received, voters did appreciate this. In a year when voters were more polarized than ever and it often was difficult for voters to discern fact from fiction, VOTE 411 with its online voter guide and our candidates nights throughout the state, gave voters the opportunity to hear from and evaluate what the candidates themselves were saying. Our websites, facebook pages, and Voter Guides also helped educate voters. There is much more to be done.

While I indicated the good news, there is also bad news in the deep divisions within our country that were highlighted in the election. This presidential election will be discussed and studied for years and years. Many of the laws we as a League advocated and lobbied for may be challenged or repealed. The Electoral College will meet on Dec. 19 to vote for president elect Trump and he will be sworn in on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This will be only the fifth time in American history where the winner of the national election failed to win the popular vote. Since 1970 the LWVUS has had a position for abolishing the Electoral College and supporting the direct election of the president by the popular vote. This would take a constitutional amendment. In 2010, LWVUs supported the compact for the national popular vote as a means to enable the president and vice president to be elected by the popular vote without abolishing the electoral college and therefore not requiring an amendment. NY is one of the states that has signed onto this compact, but it does not go into effect until the electoral college votes of those states in the compact total 270 and at present the total is only 165. It does not appear this will happen anytime soon if at all.

What can we do now? New York has antiquated election laws that disenfranchise our voters. In 2017, local Leagues are being asked to present a program on the NY State Constitutional Convention and inform LWVNYS of their opinions as to whether we should have a position on the 2017 ballot proposal. This is one way our archaic election law can be changed. Remember as you visit and lobby your state senators and assemblymen that voters this year did complain about these archaic election laws and the legislators can vote on changes to make the improvements.

Remember also to complete and return your voter service surveys by November 30. (A special thanks to those Leagues who have already sent theirs in.) They will give us the data to know exactly how much each League has done, and what if any problems you faced. Information we gather will be shared with you in next month's report. It will also help us as we work on revising the Road to the Voting Booth Part II in 2017 and keeping it relevant in these changing times.

### **Issues and Advocacy: Sally Robinson, [robintwins@gmail.com](mailto:robintwins@gmail.com)** **Legislative Procedures Update Response and Conference Call**

At the 2015 State Convention, League members agreed that it was time to update our position on whether or not we should have a full time or part time legislature and how long the terms of state legislators should be. The Legislative Procedures position is critical to our role as a state good government voice and banning or limiting outside income is a widely discussed issue in ethics reform.

The update addresses the ambiguities in the current position and aims to re-focus the position on the policies most significant to ethics reform and performance of the Legislature.

- Outside Income
- Length of terms
- Staggered terms
- Tenure for Legislative Leadership

**Email, fax or mail your responses to the Legislative Procedures Update by December 15 to be included in the consideration of an updated position.** Each local League President/Co-Presidents received the packet of info and update questions (one paper copy mailed and electronic to all) to complete consideration of an "update" to the state League position on Legislative Procedures. Local Leagues are asked to respond by December 15 to the consensus questions. So far we have heard from fewer than 10 local Leagues that they are participating by holding a consensus meeting. We hope that more will do so.

But for individual members of local Leagues who are not participating in the study, we are offering a conference call to go over the update materials and discuss the consensus questions. The call will be on Monday, December 12, at 7 pm. Depending on the number of members who participate in this call, the state board will decide at its December 7-8 meeting on how to incorporate their individual input into the overall consensus process.

Individual members will not be allowed to participate in the State League conference call consensus meeting if their Local League schedules or has held a consensus meeting.

Please respond by December 6 if you would like to participate in this call. It is open to all members of local Leagues who are not participating in a Legislative Procedures consensus meeting.

## **Legislative Agenda**

As in the last two years, we will create a Legislative Agenda booklet with a short description of many of the issues we're anticipating to work on during the next legislative session; the booklet will be available to all local Leagues in January. Attached please find the annual survey on legislative issues; please complete and return this survey **by December 1, 2016**. We still want to hear from the local Leagues and our members what issues are most important to them. The responses help to ensure that our legislative activity is in line with our members' concerns.

## **Lobby Day 2017**

Mark your calendars for Lobby Day 2017 on April 25 in Albany. We will hear from our issue specialists on "hot topics" and coordinate visits with your own legislators to lobby on issues.

## **Healthcare Update: Madeline Zevon, Co-Chair, LWNYS Healthcare Committee, [madeline.zevon@gmail.com](mailto:madeline.zevon@gmail.com)**

The New York State single-payer bill, New York Health, has successfully passed by a large margin in the last two Assembly sessions. Our focus now is to work toward passage in the State Senate. There are 22 co-sponsors and 4 other pledged votes - so our goal is in sight. The Campaign for New York Health, of which the League of Women Voters of New York State is a supporter, has been working together with over one hundred organizations to build grassroots support for this legislation. Go to the website [nyhcampaign.org](http://nyhcampaign.org) and click on resources to learn more about how the bill will save New York State \$45 billion the first year while insuring 100% of the population with a more comprehensive coverage plan. There are no co-pays, deductibles or premiums because it is paid for by a progressive income tax. Print out the postcards from this site and have constituents mail them to their Senators urging them to support the bill. The New York State Nurses Association and Physicians for a National Health Program are two of the leading supporters of this healthcare reform which builds on the progress we've made with the Affordable Care Act. The Campaign now has an upstate coordinator, Ursula Rozum, [ursula@nyhcampaign.org](mailto:ursula@nyhcampaign.org) located in the Albany area. Also, there will be a major organizing conference in New York City the weekend of January 13-15. Contact Katie at [katie@pnhpnymetro.org](mailto:katie@pnhpnymetro.org) to register.

## **Grassroots Director: Carol Mellor, [carolmellor140@gmail.com](mailto:carolmellor140@gmail.com)**

**ATTENTION NEW MEMBERS:** As the Grassroots Director, I attempt to provide a link between the locals, the members and the State Board and to facilitate understanding of how (and sometimes why) the State Board acts on advocacy matters. It is, at times, difficult to understand the relationship between the action we take and the positions we hold, a complexity which is only made worse by the relationship between the levels of League and the levels of government. If you would like to participate in a conference call exploring these issues, and any other questions you might have as a new or recent member, please contact me at [carolmellor140@gmail.com](mailto:carolmellor140@gmail.com). I am planning the call for early in the new year, but would like a sense of interest as soon as possible.

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

The state League materials for education on the constitutional convention ballot proposal in Fall 2017 are final! We are mailing a paper copy and flashdrive with the powerpoint presentation to each President or ONE Co-President of each local League. We will also email all the materials to all Presidents and Co-Presidents and post it all on the state website. We are asking all local Leagues to

schedule a full community forum **in January or February, 2017**, to present the materials or host a speaker on the topic. A form to be completed by the local League on the comments or discussion that follows the educational program is included in the packet of materials. The state League Board will be using these comments as they discuss, at their March meeting, whether the state League should support, oppose or remain neutral on the ballot proposal of the constitutional convention (on the ballot in November 2017). Plan a meeting and watch for the materials.



### **Chocolates!**

Need a small gift for a holiday speaker? Chocolates in the shape of the LWV logo are a great idea! Just call Katrina at 518-465-4162 and we'll get them in the mail to you.

## **Program and Policy Director, Jennifer Wilson, [jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:jennifer@lwvny.org)**

### **United Nations Day**

Over 90 League members and friends convened at the United Nations on Thursday, November 17th, for the annual League's Day at the UN. The event was co-sponsored by Zonta International, District 4, and the Women's Bar Association of NYS. Attendees toured the newly renovated facilities, saw various gifted art pieces from member states, and the Human Rights wall. After the tours, guests were treated to lunch in the Delegates' Dining Room. In the afternoon there were two presentations on the topics of Refugee Crisis and Anti-terrorism. The lectures were presented by two speakers: Bela Hovy, Head of the Migration Section within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the United Nations, and Mattias Sundholm, Communications Adviser to the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. LWVUS's UN Observer, Rosalee Keech, also made comments to the group about the League's role in overseeing the functions of the UN. For more details on the speakers and notes from the presentations, visit the League's website [here](#).

### **Vote 411**

The election is finally over!! Congratulations to all of our Local League who worked so hard this year to provide information on local and state races and candidates. This was a difficult year for all but our Local Leagues did a fantastic job especially with regard to Vote411! We don't have the official usage totals from National just yet but we did hear that the Friday before the election every state ALREADY has more sessions than we did in all of 2012! On Election Day itself, the voter guide section alone had over 400,000 sessions across the country! It was a 280% increase in the number of sessions we had on Election Day in 2012.

If you haven't done so already, be sure to unpublished and archive the races from this election. Be on the lookout for an email from Megan at National with greater detail on where and when we had the highest usage.

### **Citizens Union Voter Turnout Symposium**

Following this year's historic election Citizens Union hosted a forum on how to boost voter turnout in New York State. The forum featured input from representatives from the Brennan Center, the New York State Assembly, the New York State Board of Elections, the NYC Campaign Finance Board, and several advocacy groups working for minority voting rights. The League had great representation at the event with many New York City League members attending.

After the opening panel there were two concurrent panels on increasing voter turnout and partisanship in New York and the impact partisanship can have on elections. The speakers offered an interesting perspective on the topics and gave a fresh take on the issue of partisanship. The event was concluded with comments from Mayor Bill de Blasio who spoke at length about his criticisms of the electoral college. You can view the entire event [here](#).

## **LWVUS**

### **March in DC on January 21**

The LWVUS Board of Directors met this past weekend and discussed whether the League should participate officially in the planned Women's March on Washington, January 21, 2017. The board considered feedback from the State Presidents call, the State Presidents/ED listserv, and the State Executive Director calls to inform its decision. We also considered information about the March available online. After a thoughtful discussion weighing the pros and cons, the board decided that LWVUS is not planning to officially participate in the Women's March. We believe in the freedom of assembly as a cornerstone of our open democracy. We support political activism and encourage people across the United States to let their voices be heard. If League members wish to attend this event, we do not discourage it. We kindly request that League members do not wear League buttons or carry League signs in this march. We will monitor the organization of this event and if additional information emerges before January 21 that indicates it will be a non-partisan diverse, and inclusive event, the LWVUS may reconsider its decision.

### **2016 LWVUS Voter Services Survey**

As we have done in previous years, LWVUS is once again asking all Leagues to complete our post-election survey. This survey, our best source of data and critical information about the election-related activities of state and local Leagues, is used to develop helpful resources for Leagues, identify areas of needed training and support, and measure the full impact of our organization's work to protect, register, and engage voters in 2016. [Please have someone from your League take a few minutes to fill out the survey](#). Where you do not have exact numbers available, estimates are fine.