



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: March 2017**

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

- Register to attend **Lobby Day, April 25, 2017**, in Albany.
- Schedule a meeting with your County Board of Elections and complete and return survey by **April 30**
- Nominate your local League, committee or members to win an award at Convention; complete and return forms by **April 28**.
- Register for **LWVNYS State Convention, June 9-11, 2017, in Liverpool, NY** (read more details below) by May 18th.

**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

A new packet of resources for local Leagues to organize programs and events on women's suffrage history has been mailed to every local League – and a new page has been created on the state website with links to all the info, as well as a calendar to see what events are scheduled, and a blog on significant events and locations in women's history in NYS. Check it out at: <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/womens-suffrage/index.html>.

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

We know that many of you want to know what the state League board decided at its March 23-24 meeting about the position the League will take on the 2017 Constitutional Convention ballot question (oppose, support, or remain neutral). And we want you to know that the discussions many local Leagues held on this topic and shared with us were very much on our minds as we discussed it. We also want you to know that this wasn't an easy or lightly made decision.

The press release (click [here](#)) was distributed on Monday explaining that we will be supporting the Convention as a rare opportunity for citizens to take control of government and enact voting, ethics, and redistricting reforms. We have been urging these same reforms for many decades and getting almost nowhere. This past year the leaders of both houses were convicted on corruption charges and even then the legislature failed to adopt meaningful reform.

The option of a Constitutional Convention was put in the Constitution specifically for those times when the government was not responding to critical issues. It was intended to give citizens the power to act when the government will not. It is hard to argue that this is not such a time.

We know very well that there are real concerns in the public and within our League membership over the possible impact of an unlimited Convention even though any proposed changes would have to be approved by the public. The League shares some of these concerns. But we are the League of Women Voters and considering our inability to achieve critical reforms in the voting process and elsewhere, the state board could not see us passing up this opportunity to address the League's long-standing commitment to repair our broken state government.

Be assured that we will continue to educate the public on the ballot issue as we also educate on many of the prospective issues such as campaign finance and voting reforms on which we have clear advocacy goals. We will also be advocating for a delegate selection process that will help us all elect delegates that will put voters first, not their own political interests.

And that is what we are asking of ourselves. Whatever specific risks we are personally concerned about in opening up the whole constitution, as League members we need to stress the potential for reforms that we feel we cannot achieve any other way. We do not expect you to keep quiet as individual citizens about other concerns and Leagues are always welcome to put on forums that discuss all sides in our usual impartial way. In fact we *want* local Leagues to continue to educate the public on how the Constitutional Convention will work and some of the important issues it may address.

But in discussing the Convention you need to be sure to state the League position. Members can always take action as individuals, but in order for the League to speak with one voice, local Leagues may not express opposition to that state board decision. Local Leagues, using the League name, must support this ballot proposal and cannot state that they are opposed or neutral on the proposal. A Constitutional Convention is an opportunity to achieve critical reforms that Albany has refused to make. We cannot allow this point to be drowned out by all the other noise that will surely surround this question.

## **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). The Registration Kit is now available on the state website (<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon/2017/Registration-Kit-2017.pdf>) and has been attached. If you are unsure as to how many delegates your local league is entitled, please call the state office. Encourage all members to attend, even if as Visitors or for free to the workshops!

## **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. The Registration Form for this tour is also posted on the website (<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon/2017/Suffrage-Tour-Registration-Form.pdf>) and attached to this email.

## **Caucuses or Info Sessions**

Local Leagues and members can offer **caucuses or info sessions** at the state Convention to share their own concerns or successes. Local leagues simply tell the state League that they would like to offer a caucus and we'll reserve a room for you. Then, you are responsible for presenting or coordinating the discussion on this topic.

## **Volunteers are Needed!**

Volunteers are needed to help at the state Convention. You should all send as many voting delegates as you are entitled, but if you have others that want to attend only part of Convention, encourage them to become volunteers. Here are some reasons why:

- Delegates can volunteer during non-plenary hours.
- Visitors can volunteer during plenary and observe plenary at no charge.
- Volunteering is a great way to meet and network with fellow Leaguers.

Contact Joan Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator, at 315-488-4339 or by email at [jaj62@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jaj62@twcny.rr.com).

Anyone can attend the workshops on Saturday, June 10, in the morning, and, if they register as a Visitor, may observe the plenary sessions. Volunteers will be allowed to attend plenary also, as space permits.

## **Awards**

Your local League has accomplished some amazing things these past two years! You know it, and you need to get recognized for your hard work. Submit a Nominating Application to win an award for your hard work. The award categories are as follows:

- Carrie Chapman Catt Visibility And Leadership Award
- Inez Milholland Women's History Award
- Susan B. Anthony Making Democracy Work Award
- Victoria Woodhull Get Out The Vote Award
- Eleanor Roosevelt Youth Program Award
- Harriet Tubman Off The Beaten Path Award

The forms are attached and available on the state website homepage at: <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/concon/2017/Award-forms-2017.pdf>. Forms are due in the state office by April 28.

## **Advocacy, Sally Robinson, VP for Issues & Advocacy, [robintwins@gmail.com](mailto:robintwins@gmail.com)**

### **Look for 2017 Legislative Packet and Schedule Lobby Visits**

We are asking local Leagues to set up appointments with their local legislators to lobby for League issues in their home districts during the legislative break, which this year is the middle two weeks of April, <http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/2017/2017-Session-Calendar.pdf>, after the state budget is done (we think!). If more than one local League is covered by the member, please try and coordinate to have as many Leagues involved as possible.

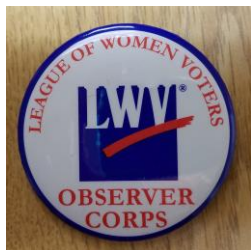
These meetings are very important and they give the legislators an opportunity to learn about League positions from their constituents. Ask for 1/2 an hour, but be willing to take less and seeing a staff person is fine. Take along copies of the 2017 Legislative Agenda to leave with the legislator or staff.

In mid-February, we sent out a package of pre-budget lobbying materials on voting reforms (<http://www.lwvny.org/advocacy/vote/voting-reform/index.html>) which are posted on the state website. We anticipate that the Legislative Packet, which we will email to all local Leagues at the beginning of next week, will also be centered on voting reforms but may cover other League issues as well. For this year, as in the last few years, we expect that some issues, in particular raising the age that young people can be charged as adults in New York State, may be settled as part of the budget negotiations. We are all waiting to see what happens but we will keep you informed as quickly and extensively as we can.

## **State Office, Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director,** **[Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org)**



For end of year gifts to outgoing board members or speakers, don't forget that we have delicious chocolates in the shape of the League logo for sale at \$2 each. Call Katrina at the state office to place your order.



We also have 2 new buttons for sale. The first is similar to the regular League button but has OBSERVER CORPS across the bottom – this is great for members of your local Observer Corps to be recognized at local public meetings.

We also are selling the new 100 Year Anniversary buttons from the state office. All buttons are \$1 each plus tax and shipping.



### **NY Alliance for Donation/Organ Donor Project**

Finally, the contract was approved for the 2016-17 organ donor registration project. This funding will go through Aug. 31, 2017. They hope to continue the project one more year, but are uncertain especially with the proposed federal budget cuts. We finally have the numbers on registration drives that our local Leagues held in September and October so we have put their stipend checks in the mail.

### **Legislative Action, Jennifer Wilson, Director of Program and Policy,**

**[jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:jennifer@lwvny.org)**

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

Advocacy training day will be held on Tuesday, April 25, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. We have moved it into the Legislative Office Building for easier access to legislators and the capitol. We are charging \$15 which includes lunch. We have asked Issue Specialists to present their hot topics for this session and then encourage attendees to meet with their legislators and watch session from the galleries. The Registration Form is attached or available on the state website.

#### **Legislative Update**

Barbara Bartoletti and I have been meeting with the new Senators to discuss our legislative agenda. During these meetings, we are also focusing on our election reform priorities and urging them to work with their colleagues to have the Comprehensive Coverage Act and Reproductive Health Act brought to the floor in the Senate. We also met with some Assembly Members on election reform and education issues. Over the last two month, we have sent memos of support to the Assembly and Senate on a number of election law, ethics, transparency, and health care related legislation. These include the Voter Friendly Ballot Act, a bill allowing for the usage of electronic poll books, pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds, a bill to close the LLC loophole, a bill to improve the fulfillment of FOIL requests, Single Payer, and legislation prohibiting e-cigarette usage near schools.

Now that budget negotiations are underway, we have turned our attention to monitoring the budget process and giving our input where appropriate. After the release of Governor Cuomo's executive budget proposal, we submitted testimony in support of greater funding for the State Board of Elections, additional transparency and ethics regulations for government agencies, and more funding for public schools.

#### **Be Earthwise**

Earlier this month the New York State League released our newest campaign: Be Earthwise. The goal of the campaign is to help citizens think about how their daily decisions can have a lasting impact on our environment. The campaign is being released in two phases – the first phase asks people to take a pledge to Be Earthwise. They are asked to commit to respect the environment and to address effects of climate change through their daily activities and consumer purchases. Next month we will be unveiling part two of the campaign which will highlight some direct actions citizens can take on Earth Day to help reduce the incidence of climate change and global warming.

To get involved take the pledge now [here](#). A link to the campaign is also available on the state website homepage. Also be sure to tell us what Earthwise issues you want to learn more about and what citizen action do you think is most important to preserve our planet. So far we have had people from all over the country take the pledge and we hope that number will continue to grow as we near Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Please share this campaign and information with your members to encourage them to participate in this important awareness and educational effort.

### **Vote 411**

Elections are coming up this spring! Ensure that you have the current login and password for your Vote 411 page. Contact [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org) for your login, help with your pages, and information about how to participate. The state League pays \$9,000 for the full license, but only charges the local Leagues \$25 for their access. Don't wait until this summer to set up your election page.

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

The good news I have to report is that NY is no longer in the lowest five states for voter turnout in a presidential election. According to "America Goes To The Polls 2016: A Report on Voter Turnout in the 2016 Election," NY now ranks 41 out of 51. Although it is an improvement, we are still abysmally low. LWVNY was one of the groups attending a March 3 meeting at Citizens Union focused on increasing vote turnout. Changing and modernizing our election laws would greatly increase turnout. Assemblyman Kavanaugh who attended part of the meeting spoke of some of the laws already in the Assembly and pointed out that it was important to look at not only what could boost turnout the most but what was feasible to accomplish. While it was thought that same day registration could have the biggest impact, moving registration to 10 days before Election Day was seen as most feasible, especially since this did not need a constitutional amendment. Many of the changes recommended and bills being introduced required additional funds which are not in the budget and for which there are no moneys. Early voting is one such example. Cost saving by combining primaries was discussed. Having the federal and state primary on one day would not only save a significant amount of money which could then finance some other changes but would certainly increase turnout. However, the two major parties have not been able to agree on one date in the past and there was not optimism that they would in the future.

Whether the Election Laws change or not, there are things are local leagues can and should be doing to increase turnout:

1. Local leagues are encouraged to not only register voters, but collect contact information and send them reminders. The LWV of Huntington is asking students to give us their name, birthdate and email so we can email reminders before the elections. When we presented Vote 18 to three classes, more than half the students did give us this information. In the November Voter Service survey, ONLY 4 leagues (Broome and Tioga Counties, Huntington, Nassau County ILO, and Syracuse) indicated they collected contact information at voter registration drives in order to do follow up. All leagues will be encouraged to do this especially since this year is local elections when turnout is lowest.

2. Town hall meetings have been in the news and state league has received questions regarding holding and/or moderating them. Should leagues offer to hold a town hall meeting? Should the league moderate such a meeting? The question was put out on our google group and although the six leagues that have responded thought that including a section on this in Road To The Voting Booth would be helpful, at the March LWVNY board meeting it was decided that a section on town hall meetings might be confusing if in Road To the Voting Booth. However, best practices for leagues re town hall meetings needs to be explored and discussed further. If you want to join the discussion, request an invitation to the Voterservicegoogle group.

3. Local leagues need to begin preparing for their candidates night by first reviewing their policies and seeing if changes need to be made. LWVNY needs to edit Road to the Voting Booth. Please contact us with suggestions or concerns. This can be by email or joining Voterservicegoogle group.

4. Any league that has not met with their County Board of Elections is encouraged to do so. LWV-Suffolk County ILO held a successful meeting at the Suffolk County BOE on March 8 where one of the things we discussed was low voter turnout in NY and ways to increase it. League members learned that what is written in Election Law is not in reality done. One example is they do not really have an action outreach plan in their annual report. They use to go to the schools but no longer do so unless schools contact them. Sample ballots are not mailed to the high schools before Election Day either. However, we were encouraged to let schools and community groups know that the BOE would come to their programs with presentation on kiosk. Attached is a brief survey regarding your league's visit to BOE. Please complete and return. Remember that a good working relationship with the Board of Elections is certainly helpful in carrying out our mission.

## **Membership**

### **Food For Thought On Engaging Younger Activists**

From *The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21<sup>st</sup> Volunteer* by Jonathan and Thomas W. McKee

10 seismic shifts that have shaken the world of volunteer management and have catalyzed (the) new breed of volunteer:

**Family Dynamics:** From *Father Knows Best* to *Two and a Half Men*

**Isolation:** From community to individualism

**Flexibility:** From rigid scheduling to volunteer availability

**Generations:** From experienced veterans to novice Gen Y

**Technology:** From face-to-face to cyberspace

**Professionalism:** From skilled workers to knowledge workers

**Episodic Volunteering:** From long-term commitments to short-term projects

**Slacktivism:** From hard work to easy, "feel-good" tasks

**Micro-Volunteering:** From big-time commitments to bite-sized projects

**Speed:** From slow movements to fast responses to change