



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF EAST NASSAU

voter

www.lwvofeastnassau.org

info@lwvofeastnassau.org

*At local, state and national levels
the League works to influence public policy
through education and advocacy.*

April 2015

Save the Dates

Wed., Apr. 1, 7:30 pm
Levittown Library
LWV East Nassau Board Meeting

Tue., Apr. 7, 6:30 PM
Hempstead Library
LWV Nassau County Board Meeting

Wed., Apr. 15, 7:30 pm
Levittown Library - See right column.

Wed., May 6, 7:30 pm
LWV East Nassau Board Meeting

Tue., May 12, 6:30 pm
LWV Nassau County Board Meeting

Wed., May 20, 7:30 pm
Topic: Human Trafficking
Speakers from D.A.'s Office

Thu., Jun. 4
Jonathan's Restaurant
Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park
LWV Nassau County

**Biennial Convention/Dinner
Speaker: Kathleen Rice**

Wed., Jun. 17, 5:30 pm
Domenico's Restaurant, Levittown
LWVEN Annual Meeting/Dinner

Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning Not Just for the Wealthy

Please join us for this extremely informative and timely meeting, when we will hear from **Beth Polner Abrahams**, elder law attorney with the **Nassau County Bar Association**, about how to plan for the distribution of what you have accumulated over the years.

Can you leave a will that will not cause a rift in the family after you are gone? Is it necessary to use a lawyer? What problem could arise if you don't?

Find out how to discuss this issue with your parents and/or with your children.

Get answers to your questions, and to questions you haven't even thought about yet. Friends, neighbors, potential members and community members are invited.

When: Wednesday, April 15, 2015, 7:30 pm
Where: Levittown Public Library
Bluegrass Lane, Levittown



Celebrating Our Past and Embracing Our Future

There has been a lot of talk at LWVUS as we look back on 95 years of Making Democracy Work and look forward to the 100th anniversary of woman suffrage and the League of Women Voters...

The League is not only a direct outgrowth of the woman suffrage movement, it is also the product of early 20th Century progressive thinking. The progressive movement trusted facts and managerial expertise as a means to reform corrupt government institutions. Our founder, **Carrie Chapman Catt**, was first, last and always a progressive, but her views on the reform of democracy were shaped by her life-long struggle to get the vote for women.

According to Robert Fowler in his book *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician*, Mrs. Catt believed three things were necessary for a genuine democracy, "The first involved **legal change: women's enfranchisement**. The second involved **creation of a good citizen through education**. The third involved **finding an institutional mechanism through which ideal citizens, women especially, could transform American political life.**"

The League of Women Voters is that institutional mechanism. In the League, Mrs. Catt "was proposing her ideal for America, her deepest dreams, her utopia."

Elisabeth MacNamara, President LWVUS

Update on Constitutional Convention Delegate Selection Position



Members are urged to attend the April 15th meeting. In addition to our regularly planned meeting on *Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning*, we will also have a brief concurrence meeting on a proposed updated position on the process of delegate selection for a State Constitutional Convention.

The last time a call for a constitutional convention was on the ballot was 1997. The State League did not support that call for a convention due to concerns about the delegate selection process. The following information is an excerpt from http://www.lwvny.org/LLresources/SBR_StateNews/2015/January/Final-Materials-to-Bd-onCon_0115.pdf where more information can be found.

The Current Position on Convention Delegates states: A delegate body of workable size should be elected by a fair, nonpartisan process. In accord with League principles, delegates should reflect our society with representation of women, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic minorities. The candidates' positions on issues and convention goals should be widely publicized to enable voters to cast informed votes at their election. Present office holders should not be eligible to serve as delegates; however, they might be considered as consultants.

A constitutional amendment will be necessary to meet some of these criteria. The updated position on Convention Delegates addresses the following concerns with the position:

- Clarifies that these reforms are a consideration, not a necessary component, in deciding whether or not to support a constitutional convention. This is in fact how the 1996 board interpreted the position.
- Drops the ambiguous "workable size" and revises the representation language.
- Adds public financing for delegates, as was intended to be in the position according to contemporary materials.

Proposed Updated Position on Convention Delegates:

The League supports the following reforms as positive factors in deciding on support for a constitutional convention. Delegates should be elected by a fair nonpartisan process that complies with federal voting rights provisions and eases ballot access to encourage participation by racial and other minorities. Public financing should be provided for candidates; and their positions on issues and convention goals should be widely publicized to enable voters to cast informed votes at their election. Statewide office holders, state or federal legislators, and state judges should not serve as delegates.

How Much Did You Know About the Midterm Election?

The 2014 election was one of the most expensive in American history because the *Citizens United* decision allowed groups to pump hundreds of millions of dollars into our elections, with little or no disclosure or transparency required.




1. How many states had voting laws that were still being challenged in court with less than a month until Election Day?
___ One ___ Two ___ Three ___ Nine
2. How many donors accounted for nearly a third of all SuperPAC donations, totaling \$200 million, in the 2014 election?
___ 350 ___ 5,000 ___ 42 ___ 75
3. In 2014, how many state legislatures introduced new laws that would restrict access to the voting booth?
___ 10 ___ 29 ___ 50 ___ 14
4. How much money was spent in the 2014 election by outside groups (non-candidate or political party groups)?
___ \$21 million ___ \$168 million ___ \$554 million ___ \$689 million

Answers on page four.

The League of Women Voters® a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

 <p>THOMAS McKEVITT MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY 17TH DISTRICT</p> <p>1975 HEMPSTEAD TURNPIKE SUITE 202 EASTMEADOW, NEW YORK 11554 516-228-4960 FAX: 516-228-4963 E-mail: mckevitt@assembly.state.ny.us</p> <p>546 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG. ALBANY, NEW YORK 12248 518-455-5341 FAX: 518-455-4346</p>	 <p>MICHAEL A. MONTESANO ASSEMBLYMAN 15TH DISTRICT</p> <p>ROOM 437 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ALBANY, NEW YORK 12248 TELEPHONE: 518-455-4684 FAX: 518-455-5477 E-mail: montesanom@assembly.state.ny.us</p> <p>111 LEVITTOWN PARKWAY HICKSVILLE, NY 11801 TELEPHONE: 516-937-3571 FAX: 516-937-3632</p>	 <p><i>Thank You</i> LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of East Nassau <i>for your dedication and commitment to the residents of Nassau County</i></p> <p><i>There is no better time than now to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude for giving so freely of yourselves. "Unless someone like YOU cares a whole, awful lot - nothing is going to get better. It's not." Dr. Seuss</i></p> <p>Nassau County Legislator Judith Jacobs, 16th LD (516) 571-6216 Fax: (516) 571-6287 jjacobs@nassaucountyny.gov</p>
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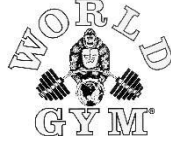


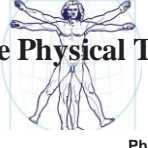
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Membership/Contribution Form

Yes, I want to support the LWV's work in citizen education and advocacy.

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Areas of interest: _____

Enclosed is my (our) check
payable to LWV of East Nassau for

_____ membership dues (\$50 Individual / \$75 household)

_____ contribution Total: _____

Please clip & send with your check to:

Barbara Josepher
LWVEN Treasurer
339 Cold Spring Road
Syosset, NY 11791

Funding for Public Education – 2015



As the legislators in Albany begin to negotiate a state budget, one of the most contentious issues will be funding for public education. Here are some of the issues and the positions that League has taken on current proposals as well as existing policy.

EDUCATION INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT: Governor Cuomo is proposing an Education Investment Tax Credit that would allow an income tax credit on donations to private schools. In essence, this would lower an individual's tax liability, thus depleting revenues that could be used to provide a sound basic education for the approximately 97% of our children in public schools. *The League and other civic groups oppose the tax credit that would divert limited public resources to private and religious schools and further widen income inequality by reducing the taxes of wealthy individuals and corporations.*

FULL FOUNDATION FUNDING: As the result of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) Law Suit, the Foundation Aid formula enacted in 2007 finally recognized the cost of educating a successful student and the ability of a local district to meet that cost. The plan was to phase in the formula over a four year period. However, the downturn in the economy led to the Foundation Aid being frozen after the second year. The Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), which has been withholding more than a billion dollars in formula-based state aid, has led to reductions in programs and services. This on top of the tax cap has forced school districts to reduce programs and services formerly provided in our schools. With a projected budget surplus, the 2015 budget should include an end to the GEA Tax Cap. Under the present system, wealthier districts can raise their property tax levy approximately 9 times more than poorer districts. *The League supports correcting the unintended negative consequences of the percentage tax cap.*

IMPLEMENTATION OF A CIRCUIT BREAKER: The STAR program which grants taxpayers relief regardless of ability to pay should be replaced by a circuit breaker. A circuit breaker type of relief, in which state funded reimbursement is given to homeowners and renters whose property taxes exceed a certain percentage of income, should be expanded. It should be automatically adjusted annually to reflect cost of living adjustments to the maximum income limit and maximum property value for eligibility

FUNDING PRE-K: *The League supports full funding for Pre-K.*

The League supports a sound basic education for all children, with greater equity in education financing for both pupils and taxpayers



Save Money with Some Simple Steps

Something that most heating and cooling systems have in common is that they require electricity to operate. Keep fuel and electricity costs under control with these tips:

Sunny days offer natural heating when you keep curtains open on south-facing windows during the day. Just be sure to close them at night.

You don't need as much heat or air-conditioning when you're away from home for long periods. Turning down the thermostat setting in fall, winter and spring, and up in the summer, by 10° to 15° for eight hours a day, can save you about 10% (or more) a year on heating and cooling costs.

Proper maintenance of your heating and air conditioning systems will help them run more efficiently and give you greater comfort.

Set your water heater to "Warm" – or about 120°F. Higher settings waste energy and increase the risk of scalding.

Drafts coming in means heated air you're paying for is going out. Air can leak around doors and windows, gaps around chimneys and wall-mounted air conditioners and where pipes enter the home. Use caulk or weather-stripping to seal leaks. This also keeps hot air from getting in during the summer.

When not using your fireplace, close the damper. Keeping it open is like opening a window.

Discover many more ways to save at www.psegliny.com/savemoney.

Voter Friendly Ballot Act



This memorandum of support was sent to the Assembly Elections Committee by LWVNYS.

SUBJECT: AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to enacting the voter friendly ballot act; and to repeal section 7-126 of such law relating to the form of ballots.

Purpose: To create a ballot layout that is easy for voters to read and use.

The League of Women Voters of New York State (the League) strongly supports this legislation to improve the ballot layout so voters will be able to read and mark their ballots more accurately and easily.

New York State voters now use a paper ballot and optical scan voting machine system, but the ballot requirements in New York State Election Law are based on obsolete lever voting machine standards. In November 2010, and again in November 2012, the League conducted a statewide survey of over 1,000 voters who used the paper ballot optical scan voting machines. A significant number of voters participating in both surveys indicated they had problems using the paper ballot and wanted an improved ballot design, which would enable them to mark their ballots with greater ease and accuracy. A ballot that is clear and simple to read makes voting easier and more accurate for voters to register their choices. The United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) report, “Effective Designs for the Administration of Elections” cites guidelines for ballots for improved readability, usability and which would result in more accurate voting.

A03389 amends the current election law to conform ballot requirements to meet these guidelines. *The League supports the changes to New York State Election Law in this bill that achieve minimum uniform standards for all ballots used in the State and still provide flexibility for local boards of elections to achieve good ballot design. The League strongly supports this bill and urges your support.*

Election Law Reform - Voter registration modernization, including same-day voter registration

The League supports paperless forms of voter registration as a means of decreasing costs and increasing accuracy of the voter rolls.

In 2013, New York moved a major step toward this goal by allowing secure online voter registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles. Ultimately, secure online voter registration should be expanded to serve all eligible citizens.

The League supports Election Day registration, registering and voting on the same day, as a proven method of increasing voter participation.

The League supports preregistration of 16 and 17 year olds to ensure that their voting participation is routine before they attend college or enter the workforce.

Early in-person voting and no-excuse absentee voting

While 32 other states have some form of early voting, New York only allows voters to cast their ballots on one Election Day, except in limited circumstances in which voters may vote by absentee ballot.

The League supports implementing early voting to provide better access to the polls for all voters. We also support a constitutional amendment to allow for no-excuse absentee voting.

Improvements to the way voters mark their ballots by better ballot design

New York State voters now use a paper ballot and optical scan voting machine system, but current ballot requirements are based on obsolete lever voting machine standards. A clear and simple-to-read ballot would make voting easier and more accurate. *The League supports improvements to ballot design that would include: (1) a clear delineation between offices with a bold vertical bar between offices and a fine line between the candidates, (2) a larger font with an absolute minimum size, and (3) fill-in circles in black instead of gray.*

The League of Women Voters of East Nassau

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