



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.*

March 2016

Special Courts in Nassau County



**Please Join Us on
Tuesday, March 15, 2016, 3:30 pm
at the Levittown Library**



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 special courts are voluntary programs that help individuals with special, identifiable problems such as addiction to drugs and alcohol, or mental illness. In exchange for agreeing to voluntarily enter and complete the program, a person accused may be able to escape a harsher penalty. In many cases, the charge is reduced or even eliminated completely in exchange for the successful completion of the program. Judicial monitoring is provided to assure that court mandated plans are followed, and case management is used to link clients to treatment programs and other needed services. Several of us have observed these courts and have been exceedingly impressed with the process, the people involved and the results. Don't miss this meeting!

SAVE THE DATES

Wednesday, March 2, 1:00 pm – LWVEN Board Meeting – Levittown Library

Saturday, March 5, 10:00 am – LWFVNY Regional Training Workshop - See February VOTER

Tuesday, March 8, 6:30 pm – LWFVNC Board Meeting – Hempstead Library

Sunday, March 13, 12 noon – LWFVNC Women's History Luncheon – Verdi's, Westbury

Keynote Speaker: Joye Browne, Newsday Columnist. You will receive an invitation.

Tuesday, March 15, 3:30 pm – LWVEN General Meeting – Levittown Library – see above.

Wednesday, April 6, 7:30 pm – LWVEN Board Meeting – Levittown Library

Wednesday, April 20, 7:00 pm – LWVEN General Meeting – Levittown Library

Matthew Rizzo from Grassroots Environmental Education will discuss groundwater issues on Long Island

Tuesday, May 10 – LWFVNY Advocacy Training Day – See February Issue of the VOTER.

March is Women's History Month

LWVNYS Judicial Advocacy Positions

Streamlining of the Court System

The League supports a unified state court system.

Improved Judicial Selection -

The League believes judges should be chosen on the basis of merit, and continues to support improvements in the judicial selection process. Candidates should be proactively encouraged to participate in the current system of Independent Judicial Elections Qualifications Commissions.

Statewide Guidelines for Law Enforcement -

The League supports the adoption of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels, to prevent racial and economic profiling.

Support of Adequate Indigents' Defense Services -

The League supports a consistent statewide system with oversight by an Independent Public Defense Commission to ensure indigents' defense is more equitable and uniform throughout the state.

Alternatives to Incarceration -

The League supports alternatives to incarceration for appropriate offenders. Drug and mental health courts that divert defendants to a more rehabilitative process and ex-offenders re-entry programs should be monitored and improved where appropriate.

Juvenile Justice - The League supports the protection of children's legal rights. Juvenile justice should focus on rehabilitation rather than punitive action. Children under the age of 18 should not be treated as adults in the criminal justice system.

2016 Key Election Dates for New York State Voters

Citizens may register to vote online via VOTE411.ORG or by obtaining a registration form from your local Board of Elections office.

Presidential Primary * Tuesday 19 April 2016

- Absentee ballot—Ballot request by mail no later than 12 April; in person no later than 18 April; Completed ballot returned by mail no later than 18 April; in person no later than 19 April
- Change of Address no later than 30 March

Congressional Primary * Tuesday 28 June 2016

- Absentee ballot—Ballot request by mail no later than 21 June; in person no later than 27 June; Completed ballot returned by mail no later than 27 June; in person no later than 28 June
- Change of Address no later than 8 June

State and Local Primaries *

Tuesday 13 September 2016 (subject to change)

- Absentee ballot—Ballot request by mail no later than 6 September; in person no later than 12 September; Completed ballot returned by mail no later than 12 September; in person no later than 13 September
- Change of Address no later than 24 August

General Election Tuesday 8 November 2016

- Must be registered to vote no later than 14 October
- Absentee ballot—Ballot request by mail no later than 1 November; in person no later than 7 November; Completed ballot returned by mail no later than 7 November; in person no later than 8 November
- Change of Address no later than 19 October

* In New York State the deadline for a previously registered voter to declare or change a party affiliation was October 2015. If you are a registered voter and did not declare or change party affiliation before 9 October 2015 you are not eligible to vote in the 2016 primaries. New registrants who declare a party affiliation when they register are eligible to vote in the 2016 primaries.

~LWV of White Plains~

Other Primary dates to think about:

- 3/1 – Super Tuesday – More delegates at stake in more southern states than on any other day.
- 3/15 – Pivotal states – FL, OH, IL, NC
- 4/26 – NE states - CT, DE, MD, PA
- 6/7 – Final Primaries – including CA
- 7/18 – Republican National Convention
- 7/25 – Democratic National Convention

Outlining the League's Priority Federal Issues for 2016

By: Jessica Jones 01/12/2016



The League of Women Voters has the opportunity to play an active role on many priority issues in 2016. In addition to lobbying the 114th Congress in support of League priorities, we are working on a number of important policy proposals put forth by the President and agencies of the federal government. We will also be participating in litigation that could have a major impact on laws and regulations supported by the League.

Here's a sample of some of the important work the League will be focused on in 2016:

Voting and Elections: Restoring the Voting Rights Act (VRA) continues to be a top priority for the League. It's now been nearly three years since the U.S. Supreme Court gutted key provisions of the VRA and Congress has failed to act on historic legislation to restore the voting rights of Americans across the country. The League will continue to lobby House and Senate leadership, and engage grassroots support, to ensure that legislation to restore the VRA gets hearings and a vote in both houses of Congress.

In the area of voter registration, LWVUS has called on the Obama Administration to comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) when applicants apply for health insurance through the federal health exchanges under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The League believes the exchanges are public assistance agencies and therefore must provide voter registration opportunities to all applicants, as is done with other social services such as the Department of Motor Vehicles or Medicaid enrollment. Some states, like California, that offer state-run health exchanges under the Affordable Care Act have begun to offer voter registration opportunities following pressure from the League. We believe proper implementation of the NVRA at the health benefit exchanges is an incredible opportunity to help every eligible American citizen participate and contribute to our democracy.

Money in Elections: As we enter a Presidential election year, billions of dollars are flooding into our political system and yet, voters still have no idea where the money is coming from. The League continues to push Congress to move the DISCLOSE Act to the forefront. We also continue to address disclosure and independent expenditures with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The League hopes to build on our success of sending nearly 30,000 comments to the FEC encouraging them to redefine these two terms and end corruption in politics.

Climate Change: Now that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized the Clean Power Plan, the historic regulations to limit carbon pollution from power plants, the implementation of these regulations heads to the states. State officials and legislatures must now follow the common sense building blocks developed by the EPA to meet the goals established in the plan. Leagues across the country are working to build support for, and promote compliance with, the Clean Power Plan.

Redistricting: Late last year, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in *Evenwel v. Abbott*, a major case that could forever change the way we view the political map. *Evenwel* has the potential to upset the criteria for drawing state and local legislative districts so that districts would be determined by the total number of voters instead of total population. The League submitted an amicus brief in *Evenwel* that supports the current practice of drawing district lines based on population counts. Leagues around the country are also involved in their own redistricting processes. The League of Women Voters of Ohio helped pass a major ballot initiative to amend the state constitution and change how the lines are drawn in Ohio's state legislative districts.

2016 promises to be a busy year. Across the country, state and local Leagues will continue to lead the way to fight back against bad voter reforms and initiatives as well as for pro-voter reforms in their own legislatures. At the federal, state and local levels, Leagues will be working hard to influence public policy and encourage participation in government on these key issues and more.

LWVNYS Education Foundation (LWVNYSEF)

Throughout its history the *Education Foundation* has produced and distributed nonpartisan, educational materials; funded activities which promote citizen responsibility in the democratic process; and facilitated communication between citizens and their government officials. It has a strong commitment to young people and to the promise of the continued success of democracy.

The League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation (LWVNYSEF) was established in 1950 as the Foundation for Citizen Education (FCE) to support the educational activities of the League of Women Voters of New York State. It is incorporated under the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of New York and is classified as a public educational charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation is dedicated exclusively to the support and promotion of the educational programs of the League of Women Voters in New York State.

The Education Foundation is the educational and fund-raising arm of *The League of Women Voters of New York State* which derives its strength from the energy and commitment of the women and men in about 60 local Leagues throughout the state. It is strictly nonpartisan, and works primarily on projects that enlighten the electorate i.e., empower through education.

The charitable support of individual people, corporations and foundations throughout New York State help us accomplish three central missions:

- Educate people on the importance of their participation in government, in the political process and, most importantly, in the life of their home community.
- Create awareness of the issues at the local, state and national levels and what average citizens can do to have an impact on their government.

Instill in young people and new citizens the knowledge of their role and responsibilities in managing their own government.

Every local League in the state can establish a grants management account with the state League's Education Foundation. In this way, local Leagues are able to accept tax-deductible contributions. In order to do this, the contributions must be made out to the LWVNYS Educational Foundation, and sent to the local League. The local League then deposits the contribution in the state League's foundation, within its own grants management account, and is able to draw funds out for educational activities and projects. Tax-deductible contributions to the Education Foundation can be by check or by using a credit card.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the state League office directly at 518-465-4162, or our LWVEN treasurer: Barbara Josepher at 516-921-8749. Be sure to let them know which level of League you wish to contribute to – state, county or local, and if local, let them know which specific League. Tax-deductible contributions to the national League can be made to the LWVUS Education Fund.

More About Water

Along with our on-going concern about the available quantity and quality of our water on Long Island, we should consider how crucial water is in order to remain healthy. Good, clean, water is extremely important for our health in general, and especially for our cardiovascular health.

We have heard many times that people should consume at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily. However, new information indicates that it is actually better to base your water intake on your body weight. According to *Prevention Magazine*, we should drink at least half of our body weight in ounces daily. So, if someone weighs 100 lbs. (which I did about 40 years ago) it would be appropriate for her to drink about 50 ounces of water per day, or about six 8-ounce glasses.

PB

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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.

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Should the Electoral College be Eliminated?

Let's begin with a basic concept. No party should be able to benefit from a defective political system, and that's what appears to be the current situation. There is a structural bias in the current system, which sometimes favors one party, and sometimes favors the other. When supporters are clustered in enough states to reach the 270 electoral votes, their candidate will win even when the majority of the population does not favor that candidate. The electoral college is a cumbersome compromise reached to appease slave states. Why does it still exist? What do you think about this? Send your response to paulablum@hotmail.com, and see it in the next issue of the VOTER.

LWVUS Has Announced Two New Positions

Following their January 29-31 meeting, the national League of Women Voters board announced a new position calling for **safeguards to govern the constitutional convention process** and a position outlining **considerations for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals**.

The positions were based on consensus reached by 246 local [including LWVEN] and state Leagues and ILOs who participated in the Constitutional Amendment Process study. Leagues from 46 states participated in the study. The positions can be used by state Leagues to address the ongoing debates in many legislatures regarding constitutional conventions, in particular as they relate to the Balanced Budget Amendment.

League UN Observer Retires



In June, Margery Cohen, long time LWV UN Observer, announced her retirement. During her 21+ year tenure as both Main and Alternate UN Observer, Margery was instrumental in enhancing the prestige of the LWV at the UN. She was a representative for League at the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, speaking up tirelessly for women and girls human rights. She was a founder of the Working Group on Girls, a coalition of over eighty non-governmental organizations that started as a committee with UNICEF and became an independent NGO. Margery served as a member of its Steering Committee and is currently chair of its Girls Against Violence Committee.

In addition to her League leadership, Margery has been an officer of United Nations Association - United States of America (UNA-USA) as well as vice chair of the NGO Commission on the Status of Women. At the UN, Margery organized countless panel discussions on women's political empowerment, gender violence, girls' human rights and other topics of concern to League. ...She effectively promoted action in solving issues, always urging us to share best practices and identify what can be done by the attendees after they left the discussion. League salutes Margery and her many achievements and thank her for many years of service and leadership. *(Kelly Ceballos, LWVUS)*

Check Them Out!

We have attempted to bring much of the valuable information from various League websites to our members via this bulletin. However, we cannot possibly keep you up to date on everything in just one bulletin each month. So, we recommend that you go to the various League websites when you have the time, and check them out. You'll find out what League is doing around the state and around the country. Go to: lwv.org, lwvny.org, lwvofnassaucounty.org, and lwvofeastnassau.org. And, of course, around election time, go to VOTE411.org for up to date election information.

*"There are two ways to conquer & enslave a nation.
One is by the sword. The other is by debt."*

John Adams 1826

**The League of Women Voters® of Nassau County
in Recognition of Women's History Month
Invites you to a Buffet Luncheon
Celebrating
"Women in Media"**



**Sunday, March 13, 2016
12 Noon to 4:00 P.M.
Verdi's of Westbury
680 Old Country Road
Westbury, New York 11590**

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**Keynote Speaker:
Joye Brown, Newsday Columnist**

~
**Among the Honorees are:
Angela Susan Anton, Editor and Publisher of Anton Media Group
Shirley Ann Bruno, Former Executive Director, Public Access TV
Silvana Diaz, Publisher and Editor of Noticia Long Island**

~
**Buffet Luncheon: \$60
Kindly RSVP by March 7, 2016**

(Invitations have been sent, but if you do not have the registration form from the invitation handy, you can use the one below.)

Please reserve ___ place(s) @ \$60.00/person for the LWVNC Women's History Buffet Luncheon

My check for \$_____, made out to LWVNC is enclosed.

I cannot attend, but would like to contribute to League. My check for \$_____ is enclosed.

Name _____

Email address _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Affiliation (of non-League members) _____

Please clip and return this form with your check payable to LWV of Nassau County, to:
LWVNC, P.O. Box 221, Port Washington NY, 11050, *on or before March 7, 2016.*

The League of Women Voters of East Nassau

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