



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW YORK STATE

# Let's Make Democracy Work!

## Voting Reforms for 2017 Lobbying Packet



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## VOTING REFORM LOBBYING 2017

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As we come upon the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women winning the right to vote in New York State, we are reminded of the incredible progress we have made over the last century.

The League of Women Voters has been instrumental in advancing voting rights for all citizens. We have fought for decades to ensure protections for voters regardless of their race, creed, or color. At the National level we have fought to maintain the Voting Rights Act, opposed laws that would allow for nationwide voter suppression, and pushed legislation that would empower voters. In New York we have fought for these same reforms at the state level. Automatic voter registration, early voting, and no-excuse absentee voting are just a few of the election law reforms we have been lobbying.

Now more than ever New York State needs to reform its broken election system! Last week we saw a renewed push from State Senate Democrats and the Attorney General. Two robust legislative packages were put forward and the League was proud to attend both press events in support of the proposed legislation.

We have heard that several Local Leagues have arranged for lobbying visits in their member's district offices for next week. We are ecstatic that so many members are eager to roll up their sleeves and get to work pushing common sense voting reforms.

Legislative lobbying in member's district offices helps affirm our presence when lobbying the state legislature in Albany. Your work at these meetings is indispensable to helping us move legislation in Albany. These meetings will give legislators an opportunity to learn about League positions and share their ideas and agenda. Information on how to set up an appointment and how to lobby is on the next page.

***This exchange of information benefits the state League in its efforts to develop strategies that promote our legislative agenda. Our influence in Albany depends on your contact with your state Senator and Assemblyperson(s). They know you elect them! If you haven't done so already, set up an appointment to see your state Assemblyperson(s) and Senator. Seeing a staff person is fine.***

We are still asking Local Leagues to schedule lobby visits during April and early May while the legislature is in recess (April 6<sup>th</sup> through April 21<sup>st</sup>). At that time we will release our full Legislative Packet for 2017. This Voting Reform Packet is available on the state League homepage, [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org), Please return the attached form to the League office following your meeting, by mail, fax or email with an attachment.

You should feel free to rely on the main points in this document and the handouts for your visit, but more background information is available online on our website for your reference.

## ELECTION LAW PRIORITIES 2017

Issue	Description	Bill Numbers
<b>Early Voting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The League supports enacting early voting in New York State.</li> <li>• Currently 37 states allow for some form of early voting.</li> <li>• Early voting should be implemented in a manner that will allow equivalent access to the polls for all voters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.2064 (Kavanagh)/ S.2950 (Stewart-Cousins)</b> Allows for early voting for up to eight days before the general election.</li> </ul>
<b>Voter Registration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The League supports paperless forms of voter registration as a means of decreasing costs and increasing accuracy of the voter rolls.</li> <li>• The League supports Election Day registration, (registering and voting) on the same day, as a proven method of increasing voter participation.</li> <li>• The League supports pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds to ensure that their voting participation is routine before they attend college or enter the workforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.1070 (Kavanagh) / S.1661 (Carlucci)</b> Allows for pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds.</li> <li>• <b>A.2090(Kavanagh)/S.2478 (Gianaris)</b> Amends Constitution to remove requirement to complete voter registration 10 days before an election.</li> </ul>
<b>No-Excuse Absentee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The League supports a constitutional amendment to allow for no-excuse absentee voting.</li> <li>• Currently 27 states and the District of Columbia allow for no-excuse absentee voting.</li> </ul>	<b>No legislation at this time.</b>
<b>Ballot Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 (3) Fill-in circles in black instead of gray.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.3379 (Kavanagh)/S.1512 (Avella)</b> Creates the Voter Friendly Ballot Act which would create a ballot layout that is easy for voters to read and use.</li> </ul>
<b>Single June Primary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The League supports legislation that would create a single combined congressional and state June primary date and would bring New York State into compliance with the Military Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A.3052 (Cusick)/ S.3562 (Stewart-Cousins)</b> Allows for the consolidation of state and congressional primaries to create a single June primary.</li> </ul>
<b>Electronic Poll Books</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The League supports replacing printed poll books with electronic poll books to eliminate time and resources spent producing paper poll books and updating voter information, and to speed up processing voters at the polls on Election Day.</li> </ul>	<b>No legislation at this time.</b>

## **2017 TIPS FOR LOBBY VISITS**

### **PREPARATION**

1. **Making the appointment:** Contact the legislator's district office. Ask for a ½ hour of time, but accept less if necessary, and do not overstay your welcome. Notify the legislator of the number in your group as well as their names, if possible. Send a letter or e-mail confirming the appointment, mentioning the issues you will discuss. **If you cannot meet with the legislator, ask to meet with senior staff.**

Try to arrange for three to five League members to attend. If your League meets with several assembly members or senators, be sure to have a League member who is a constituent present. At least one person should be experienced in League. League members well versed on the issues to be lobbied should be included when possible. A new member can be included in this exciting action if accompanied by experienced League members. When more than one local League is involved, try to have representatives from as many of the constituent Leagues as possible.

2. **Assigning roles:** Each member of the lobby team should be assigned a specific role. The following are possible assignments:
  - Researching the legislator. Someone should be prepared to brief the other members of the lobby team on the legislator's relationship with the League and his/her voting record (if the legislator is a re-elected incumbent). What are his/her committee assignments and/or leadership positions in the legislature? Is this legislator a member of the League? If this legislator sponsored bills that League supported, you may want to take a moment to express League's appreciation.
  - Moderator/leader. This person should be certain that each League member introduces himself/herself. The leader must also watch the clock. Knowing ahead how much time the legislator has agreed to spend with you, the leader must allot an appropriate amount of time for each issue. It is the leader's responsibility to "pace" the visit and tactfully keep everyone (including the legislator) on the subject. **Remember, opinions expressed should be those of the League, not of individuals.**
  - Researching the issue or issues to be discussed. Look to the materials on this subject on the league website.
  - Recording and reporting the legislator's response. The leader should not be the recorder.

***NOTE: If you anticipate printing any part of the interview in a League bulletin or newspaper, the recorder is obligated to get the legislator's permission and specific conditions under which you may print.***

Write a follow-up thank you after the visit. This is not only a gesture of politeness, but it also allows you to underscore some points made during the visit, answer any questions you were not sure about, or send a League publication to which you may have referred during the course of the visit.



**2017 LWVNYS LOBBY REPORT FORM**

*THANK YOU!*

*Local League:* \_\_\_\_\_ *League Member Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Senator:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Assemblymember:* \_\_\_\_\_

*What did the legislator say about the issues?*

**Please return completed form to LWVNY, 62 Grand Street, Albany NY 12207  
or fax 518-465-0812 or save as a pdf and attach to an email to [jennifer@lwwny.org](mailto:jennifer@lwwny.org).**