

News From *Your* State League

Update from LWVNYS

March 2009

Call to Convention 2009

In addition to your Convention delegation of seasoned League leaders, why not send a few newer members, as either delegates or observers. Convention is a great learning experience for any Leaguer to experience the League way of doing things, learn more about our issues, and network with other Leaguers.

This year, we will offer a bonus day of workshops on Friday, May 15th, entitled Strengthening League Leadership. This special program is designed to give you valuable tools for strengthening your League. We encourage leagues to send board members to these workshops even if they are not delegates or attending State Convention. Travel to Syracuse a little earlier to take part!

Citizen Education: Programs for Youth

Civic participation is a core value of the LWV. Convention 2009 will include an opportunity to learn about the types of programs your local League can implement to help high school students in your area to become more civically involved.

This year's **Students Inside Albany Conference** will be held Sunday, April 19 – Wednesday, April 22, 2009 in Albany, NY. This program is designed to increase high school students' awareness of their responsibilities in representative government and provide information about tools that will help them meet those responsibilities. Choose a student to represent your League at this very important program for youth.

LeaderSpark programs have been completed by Buffalo/Niagara, Schenectady, Saratoga, and Smithtown Leagues, thanks to the hard work of these Leagues and their community partners. Smithtown has secured funding for a second program scheduled to begin in March, and Saugerties is planning to begin their first program early next year.

Coastal Pollution

In New York State, coastal pollution must be fought on two fronts: the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes. Our goal is to turn back the decline of the Atlantic as a source of jobs, revenue, wildlife, and natural beauty. Toward that goal, officials will release a comprehensive plan for ecosystem-based management of the Great Lakes and Atlantic coasts, which will address land and water uses, economy, climate change, energy, and building capacity.

The situation is serious. New York State's commercial and recreational fisheries have only 21 percent of their value 50 years ago. Nationally, 32 percent of all monitored beaches had closings or advisories in 2007 compared with 23 percent a decade earlier. Hard clam production on Long Island is down from 700,000 bushels a year to fewer than 10,000 bushels. Despite these alarming statistics, Governor Paterson has proposed cutting Environmental Protection Fund money for oceans and Great Lakes from \$5 million to \$2 million for the coming year

Pay Equity Update

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the very first bill signed into law by President Obama. It restores the 1964 Civil Rights Act equal-pay protections for people whose jobs involve the same work. Unfortunately the Ledbetter Act does not address pay inequities across different but equally-valued job titles. The NY State Fair Pay Act (A3911, S955) addresses this problem by removing discrimination in job titles traditionally done by women and people of color. We need to build support in both the Labor Committee and the Senate as a whole. Check the March 2009 SBR for the names of the Senators who are co-sponsors of this legislation and thank them, and urge the others to come on board.

It's Lobbying Season!

When you make lobbying visits this spring, remember to inform your legislators of the LWVNYS Legislative Agenda and, even if he/she doesn't agree with our position, keep the lines of communication open.

Sprawl and Land Use

The LWVNYS urges New York State to take a proactive role in regional land use planning. To further that goal, we have joined Empire State Future, a coalition of groups and individuals interested in advancing the principles of "smart growth". In addition to providing educational materials that will augment the efforts of land use activists, this coalition plans to provide the public with a website that is informative, up-to-date, lively, and easy to use.

A statewide Community Preservation Act (S381) was reintroduced on January 7, 2009. It would allow cities and towns to create community protection funds to protect open space, support working farms, and preserve community character.

The State Smart Growth Infrastructure Policy Act (A543) was reintroduced in 2009. During the last legislative session, this bill was considerably watered down and the governor refused to sign it. The 2009 version attempts to define smart growth principles clearly and requires state agencies to base funding on these principles.

NPV Resources

Complete resources for the NPV Study are now online. You'll find a background paper, pro/con arguments, suggested resources list, a study guide, consensus questions, and a consensus response form.

In addition, any member can join the NPV Study Discussion List. All you need is an email address where postings can be sent. Just log in at <https://member.lwv.org/Login.asp>

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GET INVOLVED!
