

News From *Your* State League

Update from LWVNYS

May 2008

Convention 2008

All Leagues should be thinking about who will represent them at the LWVUS Convention June 13-17 in Portland, Oregon. It's not too late to raise funds to send your full contingent of delegates all the way from NY State to Oregon!

Lobbying for a National Popular Vote Study

The Compact for a National Popular Vote (NPV) has been signed into law in some states and introduced in many. To learn more about the Compact, log on to its website at www.nationalpopularvote.com.

Our state NPV committee gathered materials on the subject and made them available on our state League website. Once we learned that our study on whether NYS should sign on to the Compact for a National Popular Vote could only be for our own education, and not for adopting or acting on a position, our state League began lobbying other state Leagues to support a national study. On Saturday, June 14, we will be co-hosting a Caucus at the National Convention in Portland, OR. Vermont Representative Chris Pearson will provide an overview of the Compact. LWVNYS will provide a pro/con analysis as well as our rationale for proposing a national study. Finally, the Arizona League will explain their rationale for favoring a formal resolution which would allow each state League to determine its own position on the NPV and reaffirm the LWVUS resolve to abolish the Electoral College.

Does Your League have a Website?

While 37 of the 56 Leagues within New York State has its own website, 19 do not. The LWVNYS has decided to implement a pilot project, with two participating local Leagues, to provide each with a very simple website, consisting only of a simple mission statement, a list of important officers, and a contact form. These sites would be hosted on the LWVNYS web server. The URL would be appropriate to each

local League, and each completed and submitted contact form would result in an email to the designated contact person within that local League.

Voter Guides Coming

Tentative plans have been made for our Fall 2008 Voter Guides. Part I, "Facts for Voters", which will contain information about the new voting machines in addition to the usual basic information about registration, absentee ballots, address changes, and more.

Part II, "Guide to the Candidates", is more complicated, with national, statewide, and regional information to consider. LWVNYS is polling local Leagues on their individual preferences. When they have made their plans, they will inform local Leagues by e-mail.

New Voting Machines: What Your League Can Do

New ballot marking devices accessible to the disabled have been chosen by each NYS county and will be present at each polling place for the November 2008 election. Your local Board of Elections might be glad to have your local League's help in implementing this change. Here are some things you might do:

Put a statement on your webpage about the new technology that was chosen for your area, stating that your League will do what it can to support the implementation and help voters use the new technology.

Learn about the new machines in your area. LWVNYS will be distributing information to local Leagues when it has received it from vendors and formatted it appropriately.

Work with your local Board of Elections to inform the disabled community and the community at large

Assist your Board of Elections with such things as training poll workers and providing extra poll workers to observe and assist in case of problems on Election Day.

Offer to try to engage local college students to provide support at the polls.

NYS navigates the HAVA Maze

NYS is now a Paper Ballot State! Since the last DRE machine (made by Liberty/Nedap) was withdrawn from the certification process, there are no longer any DRE-type machines undergoing NYS certification!

NYSVoter, the statewide voter registration database, is expected to be operational for the 2008 Presidential Election. Voters will be able to check to see that they are registered in advance of the election. Our state League will be ready to help voters through the process of correcting any errors so that everyone who has registered is listed in the database on Election Day.

Your state League continues to monitor to ensure that no shortcuts are taken through the certification process. The integrity of all ballots must be protected to ensure accurate and secure vote results.

Planning Ahead for Local League Leadership

If your League has trouble finding willing solo Presidents, consider having Co-Presidents instead. Each year the more experienced Co-President would retire and a novice Co-President would be elected to be mentored by the now-experienced Co-President.

Ask committee chairs to create an annual report at the end of each year, reporting their committees' activities and decisions. The report should also name committee members and mention activities in progress and plans for coming years. These reports would be part of your League's formal permanent records and could serve as a valuable reference for future chairs of the committee.

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