

## VOTER SERVICE NEWS

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### **FALL 2010 DEBATES**

We are very happy to inform the local Leagues that LWVNYS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NYS Association of Public Broadcasting Stations to partner in broadcasting debates for the elections for statewide office this fall. The stations, at a minimum, intend to provide live, statewide coverage of the debates for the office of NYS Governor and our two Senate races. If we can bring the candidates to the table for the other offices, or for interesting primaries, the stations have stated their intention to carry them, live or re-broadcast. This is tremendous news! Now we have to get the candidates to agree. Stay tuned!

### **VOTER'S GUIDES 2010**

As we speak, the text for the *Voter's Guide Part I: Facts for Voters* is being prepared. Please find the order form in this SBR. We hope to have these printed very soon, so that they are available sooner than in years past. *Voter's Guide Part II: Candidate and Ballot Information* will be a challenge this year with so many candidates, and we don't yet know whether there will be any ballot issues. The time between the September 14<sup>th</sup> primary and the November 2<sup>nd</sup> election is horribly short, so we will have to get the document designed in advance of the primaries with our best guess of what's in store. To decrease confusion, we have included the option to order both Part I and Part II on this order form; if possible, please order both now.

### **CHANGES IN STORE FOR MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS**

The NYS Board of Elections has been grappling with how to implement new Federal requirements enabling military and overseas voters (MOVs) to overcome the timing and procedural problems that have, in the past, made voting difficult for them. The Federal requirements involve making ballots and absentee ballot applications available for MOVs in electronic format, although the ballot itself must be filled in and posted; NYSBoE expects to hire a vendor to accomplish this element of compliance. New York is one of the states with a late primary, and this year the primary and the general elections are as close as they can possibly be. The Federal requirement is that ballots be sent to MOVs a minimum of 45 days in advance of the election. A bill is pending in the legislature to allow the NYS BoE to apply for a waiver from this requirement based on the fact that in NYS the ballot reception date for these voters is now 13 days after the election; if the ballots are transmitted at least 32 days in advance of the election, the 45 day requirement is met. If litigation or other delays prevent the finalization of the ballot 32 days in advance, and the MOV does not receive even the electronic ballot in a timely fashion, the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot can be used. NYSBoE expects the legislation to pass and the waiver to be granted.

### **NEW ABSENTEE BALLOT FORM**

As you are busily instructing your high school seniors in the use of the absentee ballot for voting while they are away at college, keep in mind that because of the passage of League-supported

legislation (hats off to Aimee and Barbara) the form will be changing; a draft is being circulated. No longer will intrusive questions be asked concerning why the voter is claiming to be unable to get to the polls; the affirmation and a signature is enough. While this is not the “no fault” ballot we ultimately might want, and is certainly not tantamount to “early voting”, it’s a step.

**YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE IN NYS: SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

Just a reminder that these pamphlets are posted on our web site and available for Leagues to print locally or to order in quantity from the State League office. Our series of five informational pamphlets covering the voting rights of college students, homeless individuals, the physically disabled, the mentally disabled and criminal offenders looks great, and is available for Leagues to order in quantity at reasonable rates. Please contact the League office for information.