



The League of Women Voters of New York State  
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207  
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812  
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

### *State Board Updates* **May 2021**

*If you are no longer an officer or on the board of your local League, please forward this email and attachments to the new leaders of your League.*

#### **Local League To Do's (email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org) or call 518-465-4162)**

- Register your delegates for State Convention
- Voter Guide Part I in English and Spanish are now available. Orders yours by emailing [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org).
- **Enter to win \$500 for your local League by June 7** – see details below and enter NOW!
- **Complete and return an Updated Local League Contacts form (attached) with your new Officers and Board Members**

#### **LWVNYS DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) Task Force (open to all members)** ***Beginning Our Journey Toward a More Equitable and Inclusive Organization***



**Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 to 7:30 pm (flyer attached)**

**Special Guest Speaker: Shay Stewart-Bouley**

Creator of award-winning blog “A Black Girl In Maine”  
and Executive Director of Community Change Inc.

Opening Welcomes by Toni Zimmer, LWVUS DEI Committee Chair;  
Suzanne Stassevitch, LWVNYS President;

Regina Tillman, LWVNYS 3rd VP for DEI and LWVNYS DEI Task Force Chair

Learn how your League can:

- Ensure it will serve the community at large;
- Build lasting multicultural relationships and partnerships;
- Embrace social justice work and equity practices;
- Shift its culture to that of being more welcoming of diversity - in all forms!!

**Register for this workshop here:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckdOuqqjktG9XdcHwOPUIpM8yArojTu1j>

# 59<sup>th</sup> LWVNYS State Convention

June 7-12, 2021 Virtual



It's not too late to register delegates or register as a visitor! **Register online** at: [https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/sZpfeEihvqiA-AOCUoRKMQ](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/sZpfeEihvqiA-AOCUoRKMQ)

You can see the full Registration Kit here: <https://www.lwvnyonline.org/convention/2021/Registration-Kit-2021-FINAL.pdf>

The **Pre Convention Kit** is also now available. View and download it by clicking here: [\*\*Pre Convention Kit\*\*](#). In the Kit is all the information that will be voted on during the plenary sessions at Convention: Nominating Committee Report of 2021-2023 Board, Proposed 2021-2022 LWVNYS Budget, Proposed 2021-2023 Program, and Proposed Bylaw Amendments.

**The Agenda for Convention is as follows:**

**Monday, June 7**

5:30-7:30 pm      DEI training: Shay Stewart-Bouley  
*Beginning Our Journey Toward a More Equitable and Inclusive Organization*

**Tuesday, June 8-Thursday, June 10,**

5:30-9:00 pm      Workshops and Caucuses

**Friday, June 11**

5:30 pm              Opening Plenary Session  
6:00 pm              Speaker: Dr. Deborah Turner, LWVUS President  
6:30-9:00 pm      Plenary Session (continues)

**Saturday, June 8**

9:30 – 10:30      Workshops and Caucuses  
10:45 -11:45      Workshops and Caucuses  
1:00 - 5:00        Plenary Session



**The list of workshops is below:**

DATE	Title	DESCRIPTIONS
<b>TUESDAY, JUNE 8</b>		
<b>5:30 - 7:00 pm</b>	GOTV: Building Effective Programs	Discuss methods of evaluating your Get Out the Vote programs to increase voter turn-out and hear from others about their successes.
<b>5:30 - 7:00 pm</b>	PPFM: Redistricting in NYS	Learn how you can join the efforts to ensure your community has fair maps for your election districts.
<b>5:30-7:00 pm</b>	Media: Fact or Fake	Learn about media literacy and how to become an educated media consumer. This program focuses on how personal bias interacts with media bias and the need to think critically in assessing the truth of information. Specific information will be provided on how to spot fake news and ways to fact check it.

<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	Concurrence: Criminal Justice	Learn about the proposed concurrence, to be voted on at plenary session, recommended by the state Board. The Delegates will be asked to concur with the LWV of CA position on Criminal Justice.
<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	Nonpartisanship	Grace Chimene, President LWV Texas, will walk you through how to effectively message your outrage or support for political actions and policy debates without getting bogged down in the partisan debates. She gets lots of practice! Learn how to craft powerful responses with League values in challenging circumstances
<b>WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9</b>		
<b>5:30 - 7:00 pm</b>	Social Media and Websites for Local Leagues	How to be more visible using social media and websites
<b>5:30 - 7:00 pm</b>	2020 Elections: Lessons Learned and Moving Forward	Discuss and evaluate the administration of the 2020 Elections and plans to study the issue moving forward.
<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	Ranked Choice Voting	Learn about how ranked choice voting works.
<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	Virtual and Hybrid Candidate Events	Hear how the several local Leagues successfully organized a virtual candidate event - what worked and didn't work. Discuss how to combine in-person and virtual events into a new hybrid approach.
<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	Healthcare Through a DEI Lens	Discuss our healthcare system with a focus on the racial disparities and lack of services for vulnerable populations, with a discussion on kinds of solutions that could ameliorate some/much/a little of it.
<b>THURSDAY, JUNE 10</b>		
<b>5:30 - 7:00 pm</b>	Rural Places Matter: the LWV and the Other New York	Did you know that the NYS senate classifies 86.6% of New York's land mass as "rural"? Wherever you live in the state, join members of the NYS Caucus of Rural Leagues to learn about the problems facing rural areas, and how Leagues can work to address them.
<b>5:30 - 7:00 pm</b>	Modernization of Election Systems	Expert speakers from the Brennan Center for Justice, Rice University, and Voting Works will discuss recent election equipment and voting system enhancements and possible positive and negative outcomes from these modernizations.
<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	Carbon's Big Foot and You	Take on climate change by incorporating solutions at home and inspiring collaborative solutions in your community.

<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	NYYCI: Engaging Youth	Explore NYYCI, a program started by LWV of NYC and expanding across NYS which is dedicated to connecting young people to opportunities for sustained civic engagement, through our website, social media, and newsletter.
<b>7:30 - 9:00 pm</b>	<i>Stand Up, Speak Out: The Personal Politics of Women's Rights</i>	Hear about this series which follows the fight for equal rights for women throughout history, and includes interviews with women of multiple generations, sharing their stories. Through this docuseries, the voices of women from different backgrounds in the current political conversations around women's rights are amplified, with talk about the change we would like to see for a safer and more equitable world.
<b>SATURDAY, JUNE 12</b>		
<b>9:30 - 10:30 am</b>	Budget	Ask questions about the LWV 2021-2022 Proposed Budget.
<b>9:30 - 10:30 am</b>	Meet the Nominating Slate	Meet the candidates for the 2021-2023 LWNYS Board
<b>10:45 - 11:45 am</b>	Program Planning	Discuss the two recommended items to be voted on for program planning and why other items were not recommended.
<b>10:45 - 11:45 am</b>	Bylaws	Ask questions about the Proposed Bylaw amendments to the LWV Bylaws.
<b>10:45 - 11:45 am</b>	Climate Change Emergency Resolution	Hear about the Climate Change Resolution adopted by 7 state Leagues. These decisions have the goal of advocating for government (local and state) policies to stabilize the climate by returning atmospheric CO2 levels to below 350 ppm by 2100

REGISTER NOW SO YOU DON'T MISS OUT! Click on the link:

[https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/ZpfeEihvqiA-AOCUoRKMQ](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/ZpfeEihvqiA-AOCUoRKMQ)

### **Enter to Win \$500 for your Local League!**

We are excited to announce a chance for four local Leagues to win \$500! LWVUS has graciously awarded each state \$2,000 to do as they please – and we want to give it to all of you!

We will present two local Leagues \$500 each for their work in GOTV and two local Leagues \$500 each for their work on redistricting. Local Leagues can win only one award, but can submit applications for one or both awards.

Complete the online survey at: <https://forms.gle/Le5X7gKihES8qd4v5>

Or complete and return the attached survey (same survey) to [Laura@lwny.org](mailto:Laura@lwny.org).

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 7 AND THE WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT PLENARY OF CONVENTION!** Don't miss out on this opportunity for your League.

**Advocacy: Sally Robinson, [sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com) and Jennifer Wilson, [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org)**

**People's Hearing on New York State Redistricting Recap**

April 29<sup>th</sup> the League held its first ever People's Hearing on New York State Redistricting. In total we had 325 attendees on our Zoom webinar and the event's livestream on Facebook has been viewed more than 750 times.

Testifiers gave passionate accounts of how redistricting has impacted their communities of interest and why this redistricting cycle is more important than ever to ensure equitable representation for all New Yorkers. Our testifiers included:

New York Law School  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force  
Chinese-American Planning Council  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
NYCLU  
NALEO Educational Fund  
Disability Rights New York  
New York Immigration Coalition  
Hispanic Federation  
MinKwon Center for Community Action  
South Queens Women's March  
Caribbean Equality Project  
Academy of Medical Health and Public Services  
The Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, CUNY  
Southern Tier Independence Center  
Capital Region One Person One Vote Coalition  
League of Women Voters of St Lawrence County  
League of Women Voters of Westchester County  
League of Women Voters of Nassau County  
League of Women Voters of Tompkins County

Thank you to all of our testifiers and to everyone who joined us for this event!

The recording of the People's Hearing is available on YouTube [here](#). You can find a full list of our testifiers name, titles, and organizations [here](#). All written testimonies and the transcript of the hearing are available at [nyredistricting.org](http://nyredistricting.org).

**Redistricting Commission Funding Finally Released**

On May 21<sup>st</sup> it was announced that funding for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission was finally released. Although the funding had been appropriated in the state budget in early April, it took over a month for the funds to actually be released to the Commission. In early May, the League partnered with 23 organizations to sent a [letter](#) to the State Comptroller urging him to immediately release the \$4 million in funding so the Commission can begin its work.

At their last Commission meeting, the Co-Executive Directors confirmed that the funds were now available and that they will now begin to advertise the new employment positions. With funds now available the Co-Executive Directors are also seeking a website vendor and have set up a Gmail account for the Commission while they wait for formal email addresses.

Although originally the Commission planned to begin holding hearings as early as June, the Commission has now stated that it is more likely hearings will start in July. Unfortunately, even with funds available there are many logistics related to the hearings that must be decided before the hearings can officially be scheduled.

## **May Legislative Action**

### **Governor Signs Legislation to Restore Voting Rights for all People on Parole**

In May we were thrilled that the Governor finally signed into law legislation to allow any person on parole to have their right to vote restored automatically upon release. The law states that all individuals will be notified both verbally and in writing that their voting rights will be restored, and that the person will be provided a voter registration form and assistance in filling it out, along with voter education materials by the Board of Elections. Either the person registering or the Department of Corrections will transmit the completed registration application to the local board of the individual's residence.

The League will be updating all of our voter education materials regarding this issue in the coming weeks.

### **Legislature Passes Voter Registration and No Excuse Absentee Constitutional Amendments**

In May Assembly passed two constitutional amendments to allow for no-excuse absentee voting and to remove the constitutionally mandated 10-day voter registration deadline. These amendments have already been passed by the Senate and will now appear as a ballot referendum in November. The League has long supported these amendments and will be urging voters to vote "Yes" on these ballot measures.

### **Safe Staffing Legislation Passed in Legislature**

After many years of advocacy, the Legislature passed two safe staffing bills for nursing homes and hospitals to ensure both patients and healthcare workers are protected requiring them to meet minimum staffing levels of nurses and other health care staff.

Under the new laws, the state health commissioner will establish minimum staffing levels for nursing homes and will impose civil penalties if the homes fail to meet the minimum standards. Each resident would receive an average of 3.5 hours of care a day, with at least one hour from registered or licensed practical nurses and two hours from certified nursing assistants.

The new legislation also sets up clinical staffing committees in hospitals to determine staffing guidelines and decide the proper ratio between patients and staff. The panels would include hospital administrators as well as registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and other staff members who provide direct patient care.

The League has been supportive of this legislation since 2016 and we are pleased it has finally passed.

### **Senate Passes Bill to Ensure Voters' Ballots are Not Discounted**

This week the Senate took up [legislation](#) requiring boards of elections to count affidavit ballots of eligible voters if a voter appears at a polling place that is in the voter's correct county but incorrect election district.

Currently voters who show up to the wrong poll site are told to vote by affidavit ballot. Although these voters may not be eligible to vote in all races on the ballot, they are frequently qualified to vote in certain races that may appear. Rather than counting races where the voter was eligible to vote, the current law disqualifies the voter's entire ballot. Under the current law, 13,800 New York ballots in the 2020 General Election were disqualified because the voter appeared at the wrong poll site.

VoteEarlyNY has released a comprehensive report detailing the areas of the state where ballot disqualifications for this issue are most prevalent. You can find a copy of VoteEarlyNY's report [here](#).

The League is supportive of this proposal and has additional information about all of the election issues we are continuing to work on in our [Legislative Packet](#).



## **Remote Advocacy Training Recap**

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, the League held a remote advocacy training on our post-budget legislative priorities. The training included an expert overview of the NY Health Act from our State Health Committee and Issues Specialists Madeline Zevon, Judy Esterquest, and Kathy Stein, and an overview of Medical Aid in Dying and Salary Parity issues from Barb Thomas, our Issues Specialist on Women's Issues and Medical Aid in Dying. LWVNYS VP of Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, gave an overview of Joint Commission on Public Ethics reform, and Jennifer Wilson, LWVNYS Deputy Director, covered pending voting reforms.

You can find documents for each of these policy areas on our website under Legislative Packet: <https://lwvny.org/legislative-packet-2021/>

The materials include memos of support for the bills, sample social media posts and letters to the editor, and information about each of the reforms we are supporting. We will continue to update these materials as things change between now and the end of the legislative session on June 10th.

If you missed the meeting you can watch the archived video [here](#).

Local League members wishing to participate in advocacy meetings on behalf of the League should contact their Local League's Issues and Advocacy Chair or Local League President.

## **Petition for Clean School Buses in New York State**

The League of Women Voters is partnering with the League of Conservation Voters on a petition to expedite the implementation of clean zero-emission electric school buses in New York State. Almost all of New York State's school buses currently run on dirty diesel fuel, which causes pollution that negatively impacts children's health and causes climate change. Diesel exhaust and its byproducts have been linked to respiratory diseases like asthma, cardiovascular illnesses, cancer, and higher mortality rates.

Clean, zero-emission electric school buses provide a clear alternative to improve air quality and protect children's health. We believe our elected officials need to prioritize policies that would provide funding, cut red tape, and minimize costs for school bus purchases throughout the state.

[Click here to sign our petition to tell elected officials that New Yorkers demand a clean ride for kids!](#)

## **2021 Virtual Students Inside Albany Conference: Crystal Joseph, crystal.y.joseph@gmail.com, Jennifer Wilson, Jennifer@lwvny.org, and Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org**

On May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> the League hosted our first ever virtual Students Inside Albany Conference. Although last year we invited students who had been selected before the pandemic to join us for an afternoon of learning about state government, this was the first time the League has ever arranged a full conference including speakers and virtual meetings with the students' legislators.

In total 43 students joined us from around the state. On Friday the students learned about different types of advocacy and how to get involved as a civic minded young person. They had a NYS Politics 101 training and ended the evening with fun trivia about New York State.

On Saturday the students enjoyed a media panel featuring young up-and-coming Capitol reporters who spoke about their time in Albany and all the strange things about being a reporter covering New York State politics. After the media panel the students met virtually with their Assembly Members and Senators. The students were divided into Zoom break out rooms of 4-8 students so they could get a more personal experience when meeting with their legislators. In total 10 Senators and 8 Assembly Members met with students from around the state. Most students said this was their favorite part of the program.

We ended our virtual conference by encouraging the students to register to vote and showing them how they could register and where to find more information about voting. Although the conference had to be held remotely it was still a success and thus far the students have given us excellent feedback of the program.

## **From LWVUS**

### **The League of Women Voters is proud to host our annual Congressional Reception.**

Since the 19th amendment passed in 1920, various civil rights strides have been made to expand the right to vote and increase access to the ballot box. This event is aimed at reflecting upon these achievements and envisioning a future where we can all work together to make sure our democracy remains strong and inclusive.

This virtual panel will stream live on **Facebook Live on Wednesday, June 2**. LWV CEO Virginia Kase will moderate, facilitating a discussion on the "Next 100 Years of Democracy" with prominent Members of Congress and staff, including:

- Laura Peterson, Legislative Counsel for Senator Tester;
- Allison Hunn, Policy Advisor and Counsel for Senator Merkley; &
- Bill VanHorne, Chief Counsel for Senator Cardin's.

We will also see video presentations from:

- Majority Leader Chuck Schumer;
- Senator Angus King; and
- Senator Raphael Warnock.

This panel will thrive on audience engagement, with opportunities to ask questions both before and during the event.

Join the event on Facebook [here](#).