2022

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

League of Women Voters® of New York State
The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) is a unique, multi-issue, nonpartisan, political organization. It encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through advocacy and education. We can take action under all of our positions, as outlined in LWVNYS Impact on Issues. We also often take action under national positions identified in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Impact on Issues. This booklet highlights some of the key issues that we anticipate taking significant action on in the 2022 Legislative Session.

**TAKE ACTION! IT’S EASY!**

To take action on the issues listed in the brochure or any other issue, contact your elected officials and make your voice heard!

To learn more about a particular issue and/or how you can help advance our legislative agenda, you can contact LWVNYS office at 518-465-4162, email lwvny@lwvny.org, or contact a member of the LWVNYS Issues Committee:

- **Judie Gorenstein**, President
  judiel728@aol.com
- **Sally Robinson**, VP/Issues & Advocacy
  sally.s.robinson@gmail.com
- **Laura Ladd Bierman**, Executive Director
  Laura@lwvny.org

For Information on the State Legislature and Pending Legislation

https://nyassembly.gov/
https://nysenate.gov
http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/  
(Bill Text, Status, Summaries, Sponsor Memos, Floor Votes)

---

**ELECTION LAW**

**Expanding Early Voting**
The League supports expanding early voting by reducing the maximum number of registered voters per early voting poll site and ensuring state funding for expanded site locations and hours.

**State and County Boards of Elections Reform**
The League supports fundamental change to achieve improved operations of county and state boards of elections, with an immediate focus on increased transparency and accountability for staffing and procurement at the NYC BOE. The League also supports improving the timeliness and transparency of tabulating and reporting of election results to the public, while ensuring voters are given a chance to cure absentee ballot deficiencies and voter intent is protected.

**Reducing and Eliminating the Voter Registration Deadline**
The League supports lowering the voter registration deadline from 25-days to the constitutionally mandated 10-day deadline. In the future, the League hopes to see the 10-day registration deadline eliminated in favor of a same-day registration structure.

**No-Excuse Absentee Voting**
The League supports an absentee voting system that does not require voters to provide a reason for requesting an absentee ballot.

---

**GOOD GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**Campaign Finance**
The League believes that additional meaningful reform of the current laws is necessary for a successful public financing system. Priorities for reform include further reduction of all contribution limits, including contributions to parties and special “pay-to-play” limits on contributions by lobbyists and those who do business with the state. The League believes that party housekeeping accounts should be banned or significantly reduced and that transfers of campaign contributions should not be allowed. The personal use
of campaign funds by candidates should be banned and campaign fundraising during the legislative session restricted. We believe that there needs to be independent and robust enforcement for all candidates.

**Ethics**
The League will continue to advocate for the effective implementation and improvements of ethics laws, including replacing the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) with a new entity that provides for effective and independent monitoring of state ethics.

**HEALTHCARE**
The League intends to continue efforts to improve equitable access, cost containment, and safety in healthcare. To achieve these goals, the League supports adequate financing to ensure medical resources and expanded delivery options to underserved areas, healthy-living promotion, disease prevention, school-based health services, long-term care, the full range of reproductive health services, and evidence-based substance-abuse programs including tobacco control. The League supports single-payer public financing to lower administrative costs, reduce the cost of drugs and devices, and promote universally equitable access to quality healthcare. The League also supports measures for enhancing the safety of patients and staff in acute and long-term care facilities.

**Medical Aid in Dying**
The League supports the option of medical aid in dying for the terminally ill.

**JUDICIAL ISSUES**

**Streamlining of the Court System**
The League supports a unified state court system. The League believes judges should be chosen on the basis of merit and continues to support improvements in the judicial selection process. Candidates should be proactively encouraged to participate in the current system of Independent Judicial Elections Qualifications Commissions. The League supports the adoption of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels to prevent racial and economic profiling.

**Support of Adequate Indigents’ Defense Services**
The League supports a consistent statewide system with oversight by an Independent Public Defense Commission to ensure indigents’ defense is more equitable and uniform throughout the state.

**Alternatives to Incarceration**
The League supports alternatives to incarceration for appropriate offenders. Drug and mental health courts that divert defendants to a more rehabilitative process and ex-offender reentry programs should be monitored and improved where appropriate.

**Fundamentally Reform Our Criminal Justice System**
The League supports a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices, pre-trial procedures, sentencing, incarceration, and re-entry.

The League supports the elimination of systemic bias, including the disproportionate policing and incarceration of marginalized communities; policing practices that promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve; collaboration between government and community throughout every stage of the criminal justice system; a focus on humane treatment and rehabilitation with the goal of promoting the successful reentry into communities of those who have been incarcerated; and reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law-enforcement programs and policies (including scheduled, periodic audits of program and policy effectiveness).

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Energy and Climate Change**
The League supports legislation, regulation and executive action to protect natural resources, public health, and the economy from impacts of the fossil fuel industry and favors the development of renewable energy to meet emissions goals and slow climate change. We believe that the state should support renewable energy, including relevant qualifying criteria for subsidies. The liabilities, costs and expenses associated with fossil fuel operations should be directed to the industry.

**Hazardous Waste**
The League supports the proper labeling and disposal of hazardous waste products and a ban on importing drilling and other hazardous waste from other states. We promote actions that move New York toward a Zero Waste future.

**Agriculture**
The League supports policies that protect food production and distribution while diverting food waste from New York’s landfills, incinerators and other waste treatment facilities.

**STATE FINANCES AND EDUCATION**

**Greater Equity in Education Financing**
Past Campaign for Fiscal Equity court-ordered state aid increases should be funded irrespective of the
property tax cap. The League also opposes the use of “geographic shares” as a basis for allocating either operating or capital aid and believes that the past practices of “holding harmless” school districts and apportioning incremental aid by geographic shares perpetuate inequities for both pupils and taxpayers.

**Reform of the Property Tax System**
The League advocates for uniform equitable assessment and property tax systems. The League accepts the necessity of local property taxes, while at the same time opposing overreliance on property taxes. The League favors implementing a property tax circuit breaker based on need, with an annual cost of living adjustment (in lieu of the STAR program) to alleviate the impact of high property taxes on some households.

**EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

**Fair Pay**
The League supports fair pay reforms, including passage of equal-pay-for-job-titles-of-comparable-worth legislation.

**ERA**
The League supports passage of an Equal Rights Amendment for all protected classes.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**Domestic Violence**
The League supports measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence. We also support protections against discrimination for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

**Human Trafficking**
Human forced labor and sex trafficking should be stopped through legislation and changes in public policy. Victims of human trafficking should be provided with services to facilitate integration into the community.