League of Women Voters of New York State announces one million dollar gift

On Giving Tuesday 2021, the League of Women Voters of NYS (LWVNYS) announced it has received an anonymous $1 million donation to expand and strengthen its fight to defend democracy and voting rights for all.

The donation comes during a time of great transformation for the organization which recently celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in 2019. This gift will allow the League to bolster efforts to address voter suppression at the state and local level. With this gift, the League will expand efforts to educate voters and work to ensure voting ease and access for all New Yorkers.

Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director of LWVNYS, announced today, "This gift is a new beginning for the State League, providing it with new resources to address voter access and engagement among many elements of its mission.”

This is the largest gift LWVNYS has ever received, and although the donor wishes to remain anonymous, they have a deep commitment to the League’s work. One of the donor's motivations in making this gift is to draw attention to the crucial importance of the League of Women Voters as a non-partisan organization that seeks to educate, inform and encourage citizens to take an active part in their governance at every level. The donor reminisced about her early experiences with parents who believed in taking an active role as citizens. "I remember walking with my mother door to door in neighborhoods to hand out political material and to talk with people about upcoming elections. I am grateful to my parents for nurturing a spirit of civil debate and discourse.” stated the donor.

With this gift, the League will strive to increase New York State’s voter participation rates. New York State ranked 30th in the nation for turnout in 2020. The League plans to use a portion of this donation to increase voter access and education so that New York can rank among the top ten states for voter turnout.
The League is particularly focused on increasing youth participation in elections. In 2020, only 45% of 18 to 29-year-olds cast a ballot in New York State. The League seeks to increase youth voter participation to 60% in New York State through improved outreach and education.

“Over the last decade, the League has successfully advocated for the modernization of New York State’s elections, resulting in passage of progressive voting rights reforms that increase ballot accessibility. Now the League is taking on the monumental task of informing voters of these rapid operational changes while simultaneously working to provide nonpartisan election information in the form of candidate forums and ballot guides. This donation gives the League the foundation it needs to expand our current educational efforts and reach new, underserved communities throughout New York State,” said Laura Ladd Bierman.

Judie Gorenstein, President of the State League said, “With the beginning of our 2nd century of work, the state League sees this gift as a new opportunity that will create a more impactful state League for all New Yorkers. While this is a significant gift, it does not fully fund the State League in perpetuity. In fact, the donor hopes the gift will inspire others to support the mission of the League. This gift provides a huge endorsement of the state League and will also benefit local Leagues around the State.”

The state League looks forward to sharing news of future developments related to this gift. To find out more about the League and how to support it go to www.lwvny.org

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1 https://now.tufts.edu/news-releases/half-young-people-voted-2020-major-increase-2016