



---

The Blake Annex | 1 Steuben Place | Albany, NY 12207  
ph. 518.465.4162 | fx. 518.465.0812 | [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org) | email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org)

## *State Board Updates* November/December 2022

**The state League office has moved! Our new address is:**

**The Blake  
1 Steuben Place  
Albany, NY 12207**

**(same phone, emails, but no fax anymore)**

**(mail to old address is being forwarded so no worries about anything already sent)**

### **Local League To Do's (email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org) or fax 518-465-0812)**

- Submit data tracking form to LWVNYS by Dec. 10 (and the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month); questions attached in word document but must be completed online at: <https://forms.gle/jvtf1kFwbGC8QDsX7>
- Submit your local League's Legislative Priorities by Feb. 1.
- Schedule a meeting of your members to discuss and submit the program planning packet by March 1.

### **Events Calendar**

- Thurs, Jan. 19, 7 pm Presidents' Zoom
- June 2-4, 2023 LWVNYS Convention, Albany

### **President's Report, Judie Gorenstein, [judieL728@aol.com](mailto:judieL728@aol.com)**

Last month was the time to be thankful: voters throughout the US were empowered and voted to protect our democracy. LWVNYS and all our local Leagues, ILOs and MALS did their best to educate voters, empower them and GOTV. We all worked together, with LWVUS, local Leagues, other organizations in different communities to accomplish our mission.

This month is a time to not only be joyous and celebrate, but time to be reflective, looking at the past and then to the future. We need to celebrate our successes and there were many. However, though our democracy has survived for now, we know how fragile it is and there is so much more we need to do. At the December LWVNYS board meeting, we looked at our accomplishments as a board and thanks to all the data and stories you provided in the surveys, we saw the enormity of what Leagues have done statewide. (Some of the data from the VS surveys is shared in this SBR. Very impressive!) However, as a board we also needed to look at what goals and objectives might not have been met and what can be done to meet them. We did and will share them on the Presidents' zoom call scheduled for **Thursday Jan 19, 2023 at 7 pm.**

2022 was a very good year for LWVNYS. We not only registered and educated voters but GOTV. We advocated and lobbied and filed Amicus briefs. We were influential! We made a difference!

2023 promises to be an even better year. We look forward to working together. We look forward to seeing everyone at LWVNY Convention (June 2-4 in Albany)! This month celebrate and have a very Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year

## **State Office**

### **LWVUS Data Tracking**

The state League is so pleased to report that 25 local Leagues submitted responses to the monthly data tracking form for activities in October. And, we are again astounded by the results from just 25 local Leagues:

- 245 educational events/rallies/forums were held
- 147 events were held focusing on the mechanics of voting (requirements, procedures, etc)
- Over 7,700 individuals were engaged in League work in-person
- Over 13,000 individuals were engaged in League work virtually
- 171 other organizations partnered with Leagues to do the work
- 46 meetings with local BOE officials or other public officials were held

Keep up the great work – and be sure to complete the form for your November activities **by Dec. 10** online at: <https://forms.gle/jvvf1kFwbGC8QDsX7>. And, let's see if we can get more Leagues and even more data to show our tremendous impact in our communities!

### **LWVUS President Visit**

LWVUS President, Dr. Deborah Turner, came to Albany for a couple of days. She was invited by LWV of Albany to attend their gala celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The state League staff took Dr. Turner to the NYS Capitol for a tour – the 45 minute tour turned into 1.5 hours which was full of interesting tidbits and history. At lunch we were joined by state President Judie Gorenstein, and Board Members Pattie Garret, Regina Tillman, Nancy Rosenthal and past LWVNY President Dare Thompson. After lunch, we all went to the NYS Museum and the NYS Library staff had pulled out some documents from the women's suffrage movement in NYS. A librarian explained all



the documents and we were able to view and handle many of the items, including the minutes from the 1848 meeting in Seneca Falls where the Declaration of Sentiments was



presented, posters in support of the suffrage vote in 1917, journals of discussions and meetings, and anti-suffrage marketing materials. It was all fascinating and I do believe the Dr. Turner was impressed. That evening Dr. Turner attended and spoke at the LWV Albany gala which was attended by over 100



people.

### **State Convention is Coming!**

The LWVNY Biennial Convention will be held on **June 2-4, 2023** at the Crowne Plaza Albany – Desmond Hotel (yes, it'll be an in-person Convention). We have started to make plans for the Convention and your local League should, too. The Registration Kit will be emailed in late February so start thinking about who might represent your League.

If you have any specific topics that you would like to see for **workshops**, email [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org) your ideas.

If you have any suggested **amendments to the League's bylaws** (<https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Bylaws-as-Amended-June-2021-Convention.pdf>), email [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org).

If you have any suggestions for **officers or members of the state League's board of directors**, email Kate Jankowski, Nominating Committee Chair, at [kwillower@hotmail.com](mailto:kwillower@hotmail.com). You can nominate yourself or someone else. The Committee will be considering potential nominees and reaching out to people in January.

If you have ideas for **new positions, updates to positions**, etc, watch for the separate packet of info to be emailed later this week and see below for an explanation (in Issues and Advocacy Report).

### **Voter Services, Nancy Rosenthal, VP for Voter Services,** **[nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com](mailto:nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com)**

*Compiled and written by Nancy Rosenthal, Jane Colvin and Sheila Bernson (and Milly Czerwinski, staff)*

Many thanks to the local Leagues that responded to the 2022 Voter Service Survey! To date, we have tallied the information from 31 Leagues that have responded (that's 74% of the 42 Leagues!) and know that we will be receiving more shortly and will update these data. The State League will use this valuable information for grants and to identify and share with all local Leagues the best practices from your comments. Selected data gathered to date can be seen at the end of this report. If you would like to see how your local League efforts and activities compared to others, please contact me for a copy of the complete spreadsheet. (Warning: it's enormous.)

### **Voter Registration and GOTV**

While some increase in local League activities might be expected on a year over year basis, this year the increase seems to have been exceptional, especially in voter registration and GOTV areas.

Some of the more astonishing results from the 31 responses included:

- Almost 73,000 GOTV materials were distributed, including over 54,000 postcards, and almost 7,000 Palm Cards
- Social Media usage, barely registering last year, included 119 website posts, 297 Instagram posts, 497 Face Book posts and even 22 Twitter posts. Likes were numerous!
- 26 Leagues participated in Vote411, posting 112 races
- Leagues conducted 420 registration drives, registered over 3,500 new voters, and distributed 4,900 forms

Twenty local Leagues continued their outreach to underserved communities with minorities and with disabilities, partnering with a wide variety of organizations including community organizations like Disability Rights of NY, food pantries, community colleges, libraries and churches. One League sent out 730 postcards to targeted addresses with a 40-60% likelihood of voting. Naturalization ceremonies

were the focus of only 10 Leagues that conducted 33 registration drives, but the efforts paid off with the registration of 861 new voters and distribution of over 1,200 forms.

Perhaps stimulated and assisted by the League's active Youth programs, voter registration efforts – and results - at high schools increased, with 13 Leagues conducting registration drives at 53 schools, resulting in 2,102 new voter registration and the distribution of over 1,300 forms.

As a sign of the times, more Leagues turned to social media (and/or to younger members who could assist them) to get their messages out. This year 24 Leagues used some form of social media to post their message and track the Likes received.

The state's Voter Guide II in English and Spanish was well received by Leagues that ordered 7,865 English copies and 777 Spanish copies

### **Candidate Forums**

The results from the 31 responses to the Voter Service Surveys are summarized below:

- 265 League members volunteered to work at candidate forums
- 151 joined the League as new members.
- 85 Candidate forums were held-- 42 were virtual, 34 were in-person, and 9 were hybrid events. Attendance at in-person forums totaled 1,452; attendance virtually after-the-fact totaled 1,989. The grand total for all virtual views of candidate forums (virtually including hybrid events) was 20,438.
- Volunteers are essential to the smooth-functioning of candidate events. Leagues reported that 265 people volunteered for candidate forums.
- Forty-three Leagues collaborated with other organizations in facilitating (co-sponsoring) the live-stream or virtual forums. Examples of organizations include other Leagues, colleges, town halls, libraries, radio stations, tv stations, newspapers, faith-based organizations.
- 12 Leagues reported cancelling a candidate forum on account of the League's "Empty Chair Policy." Other reasons for cancellation included: lack of candidate response, lack of participation by one candidate in a two-candidate race; candidate scheduling issues.
- The races that were covered at League-sponsored candidate events included: State Senate, State Assembly, US Congressional Districts, City Council, City Mayor, Village (Town) Trustees, City Court Judge, Town Justice, Sheriffs, NYS Supreme Court Justices, Library Trustee, County Clerk, City Commissioner of Public Works.

### **Relationship with Local Boards of Elections**

For many Leagues, a relationship with the local Board of Elections (BOE) facilitated their GOTV efforts and their accessing of candidate information. Most Leagues have a good relationship ("open cordial relationship") with both local BOE commissioners, though a few said one commissioner was more accessible than the other commissioner. Continuing to build a relationship with the BOE will better serve League efforts.

The Voter Service Surveys point to steady and positive communication with County BOEs. Many Leagues sent "integrity" materials to their local BOE; most Leagues have on-going positive relations with their BOEs; some connect only during election season. One League took part in a "virtual Post Election Meeting" with their BOE. Other interactions with the BOE include formal sit-down meeting

after Thanksgiving and before the end of the year; working together to respond to “issues raised;” one League delivered “I VOTED” stickers to their local BOE; informal meetings to discuss voting issues; volunteering to assist BOE as regular poll workers; post-election annual meeting with BOE; one League noted seeing their BOE on election night for AP reporting.

One League consulted “informally” with their local BOE to discuss voting rights for individual with federal felony conviction record, and whether a new citizen whose Naturalization Ceremony was held after the final day to register could go to their BOE that day to register to vote.

One League invited new BOE commissioners to speak at their annual meeting; one spoke.

One League, together with students from Vassar College, instituted legal action against their BOE about whether a polling site should be located on the Vassar College campus; the League prevailed and the polling site was set up on the college campus.

### **Impactful Activities**

Leagues wrote about their most impactful activities this election season. There are so many impressive ones that it’s hard to choose which ones to write about. Set forth below is a list of some of the most impactful activities that Leagues reported.

- Went to Tops Grocery on the East Side of Buffalo following the May 14 mass shooting
- Held poster project competition with area BOCES Media Arts Students. LWVNYS grant paid to print 250 posters which were distributed to all [local] high schools and libraries, etc.
- Candidate Forum and Naturalization Ceremony held at National Women’s Rights Park in Seneca Falls
- Various voter registration drives at colleges “inspiring” “sustained engagement with students”
- Being out in the community for NVRD, Women’s Equality Day, Ithaca Festival Parade
- Created Flyer explaining the new Congressional Districts, and the special election on account of Rep Delgado’s new position as Lt Governor; was very helpful to voters
- “Tabling Events” resulted in five new members
- Collaborating with other community organizations included: Libraries, YMCA, Food Pantries, Fuerza Unida, Westchester Women’s Agenda, Disability on the Move, Westchester Black Women’s Political Caucus

Data and numbers on the specific questions will be included in a later State Board Updates when we have received 100% of the local Leagues’ responses.

### **Vote 411, Milly Czerwinski, Organizer, [Milly@lwvny.org](mailto:Milly@lwvny.org)**

**From LWVUS**, we received the following data on Vote 411 usage from January through November.

Total Users: 285,359  
New Users: 262,494  
Returning Users: 22,865  
Total Number of Sessions: 339,163

During the 2022 election season, New Yorkers visited Vote411 339,163 times. The “New Users” amount indicates the number of people who hadn’t used Vote411 previously during the 2022 election season. The “Returning Users” amount indicates the number of people who had used Vote411 previously during the 2022 election season.

### **LWVNYS Data**

Overall, the percentage of candidate who participated in Vote 411 in NYS was 222 of a possible 435 (51%). The 222 candidate response total includes all 9 (100%) candidates that ran for statewide offices. Overall, we had a solid response rate from Congressional and State Senate candidates, with a lower response rate for State Assembly candidates. The state Senate and Assembly races were lowest in the NYC area; this rate is because in many of those races, a “ghost” candidate was running as the real race was in the primary race. The data below is only for candidates in the November election; more candidates participated in the primaries, but if they lost their race, they are not included in this data.

#### Candidate Response Statistics

Total Number of Candidates (Includes Gov, AG, U.S. Senate): 435

Candidates Who Have Responded: 222

Percentage of Candidates Who Have Responded: 51%

Congressional Candidates: 54

Congressional Candidates Who Have Responded: 36

Percentage of Congressional Candidates Who Have Responded: 66%

State Senate Candidates: 110

State Senate Candidates Who Have Responded: 65

Percentage of State Senate Candidates Who Have Responded: 59%

Assembly Candidates: 262

Assembly Candidates Who Have Responded: 112

Percentage of Assembly Candidates Who Have Responded: 43%

Thanks to all the local Leagues and members who helped to set up Vote 411, encourage candidates to participate, and market Vote411 to the public!

**Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy,**  
**[sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com), and Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Deputy Director,**  
**[Erica@lwny.org](mailto:Erica@lwny.org)**

### **Legislative Agenda**

The state League has again created a Legislative Agenda booklet in which the current legislative issues to be considered by the state League are described. These items will be the ones monitored and on which we will take action during the upcoming legislative session. The state League will be shipping copies of this booklet to all local Leagues at no charge. Please use the booklet when meeting with elected officials, at membership meetings, and to educate potential members about the League’s positions.

## **Legislative Priorities**

As the legislative session approaches, the State League is beginning to meet with coalition partners to make plans for our advocacy efforts in the coming year. Recommendations made by local Leagues will once again be used to help determine the amount of resources given to each of the issues and on what issues members are most interested.

The Legislative Priorities form is attached to this email. Each local League should complete this form based on discussions at membership meetings and with their local Board. Please complete the online form **by February 1, 2023** - the link to the form is: <https://forms.gle/vTUscsE1E67DeS68> .

## **New York State Equal Rights Amendment**

*Currently 26 states have a state level ERA, including sex as a protected class in the state constitution—New York State does not.* The good news is that we worked on the passage of a statewide ERA constitutional amendment in last legislative session and it passed! In the wake of the overturning of *Roe v Wade*, a special session was held in June and the Legislature passed the New York State's Equal Rights Amendment. However, in order for it to be codified in our constitution it must be passed a second time by a separately elected legislature and then voted on by the public. We will need to work to pass it again this session and then ensure that voters are educated and prepared to vote yes when it goes on the ballot in 2024.

The NYS ERA is unique! In addition to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, or sex, it will also include pregnancy outcomes, reproductive health care and autonomy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This would ensure that access to reproductive rights and LGBTQIA+ rights would also be protected in the state constitution.

The League has been advocating for the ERA for decades and will now fight for a state ERA. While we hope that second passage of this bill will happen early in the 2023 legislative session, we will need to be prepared if it doesn't. We will also need to be prepared to launch a voter education campaign.

We are creating a LWVNYS ERA Advocacy Taskforce, which will include one representative from each League who will join monthly meetings and be kept in the loop on all things ERA. This appointee will be responsible for relaying important updates to their League, coordinating lobbying efforts and being the point person for their League. **Please determine who your local League ERA Advocate representative will be and have them fill out the form [here](#) by January 1<sup>st</sup>.**

A townhall on the new ERA will be held by NYCLU today, **December 6<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30pm**. Click [here](#) to sign up for the townhall.

## **Let New York Vote Annual Priority Meeting**

This year the State League was a part of the organizing committee for the Let New York Vote Annual Priority meeting, held on November 17, 2022. The committee voted on 2023 priorities and agreed on advocating for the following: the constitutional amendment process for no-excuse absentee and same-day registration, ending felony disenfranchisement, the NYVRA database bill, board of elections reform, youth voting rights, voting in jails, and a plain language ballot initiative.

## **Preparing for State Convention 2023**

### **Program Planning for State Convention 2023**

As it does every year in which there is a state convention, the State League will send all local Leagues information on how to help develop a State Program, i.e. suggesting of new issues to be selected for concentrated study, which positions need to be updated, and whether any existing positions should be dropped for 2023-2025. This information will go out to local Leagues later this week. This can be done at a Board meeting but we urge Leagues to seek as much member input as possible in developing their response. The response is due to the State League **by March 1** in order to be considered by state Board and then at Convention. Full details will be contained in a separate State Program Planning package.

### **Other**

#### **Election Protection Education**

In October, the State League launched an education campaign in which we provided local Leagues and members with materials that detail how NYS runs secure, reliable, and fair elections. These materials can be used as talking points with local news outlets, delivered to county board of elections, and distributed to voters who might have questions about how it all works. This campaign was fairly successful and received great feedback from boards of elections commissioners. We also had a number of letters to the editor on this topic printed in papers around the state.

#### **Election Monitoring**

This year the League of Women Voters of New York State took part in the Election Protection effort (1-866-OUR-VOTE) run by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and Common Cause. During early voting and on election day we were in the command center working to escalate issues called in from voters across the state to ensure everyone had equal access to the ballot this year. This year is the first year the State League recruited local Leagues to participate in a post-election ballot canvassing observation led by the Lawyers Committee and Common Cause. Volunteers observed the canvassing of ballots to look for inconsistencies and report any sort of disruption at canvassing sites. Volunteers from the League were recruited from the following counties: Kings County, Suffolk County, Orange County, Ulster County, Dutchess County, Putnam County, Rockland County, Onondaga County, Tompkins County. These counties were chosen either because they had seen an uptick in election denialism organizations or had contentious races this season.

#### **Vassar College Lawsuit Win**

The Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF), The League of Women Voters (LWV) of the Mid-Hudson Region & New York State, county-based Dutchess Student Voting Coalition, and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) celebrated a significant victory for Vassar College students. The November lawsuit win guaranteed that an accessible polling place would be added on campus on Election Day in November. The Honorable Christie L. D'Alessio of the Supreme Court of the State of New York granted the entire petition of a lawsuit filed just two days prior, which argued that the Dutchess County Board of Elections (BOE) was in violation of state law. Judge D'Alessio's decision effectively orders the Dutchess County BOE to situate a polling place at Vassar College immediately.

**[rmt370@gmail.com](mailto:rmt370@gmail.com), and [Crystal Joseph, DEI Task Force Co-Chair,](mailto:Crystal.Joseph@lwnyc.org)**  
**[campus@lwnyc.org](mailto:campus@lwnyc.org)**



**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Organizational Assessment:** to be issued shortly to all local Leagues of LWVNYS. Two years ago, this assessment was applied to selected local Leagues. However, this year, we hope to ascertain the growth in awareness, knowledge, skill, and abilities related to DEI implementation throughout the entire State. We will ask for its completion by local BOD's using a method that ensures input to reflect your League, not just of one or two individuals. Please look for more information soon on this important assessment tool. If any questions, please feel free to contact me at [rmt370@gmail.com](mailto:rmt370@gmail.com).

### **21 Day Racial Equity Indigenous Challenge:**

We had 115 people register for the 21 Day Challenge which ended on November 26th. Much appreciated also were the Board members that joined in on the challenge! We had taken a lesson from the previous 21 Day Challenges conducted, having learned from them that daily reminders were critical to assisting participants in holding the activity 'on their front burner' for 21 days! *DEI Task Force members assisting the Vice President in that endeavor were: Linda McKenney, Sharen Barboza, Gail Volk, and Peggy McKenna.*

I proceeded to intertwine serious topics with music by Indigenous Native Americans and the challenge was well received with positive comments forthcoming since day #1. A sample:

- Loved A Gift of Song. Played it for some neighbors. On a day when I am so stressed about current events, I found this music a gift.
- Fascinating, sad reading. Thank you, Regina
- Saved the link to find out about land acknowledgements for future reference.
- Regina, just to let you know, I have committed to and am really benefiting from the daily materials you are sending. As an enrolled member of the Mvskoke Nation of Oklahoma who was raised in that state but away from the Nation's traditional culture, I especially appreciate these great resources. Thank you so much.
- I listened to and loved this song too... and didn't know [the Band] was comprised of Native Americans. Thank you.
- Always good to read about the Three Sisters again. Thanks.
- I brought it up yesterday. Had joined friends' family and spoke about the women picking the chief and throwing them out if, after 3 warnings they didn't self-correct. I told my Mom, too. She liked that idea.

Resources related to this challenge and to Land Acknowledgements are coming soon.

### **2023 Students Inside Albany Conference: Laura Ladd Bierman, [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org)**

The 2023 Students Inside Albany Conference will be held May 21-24 at the Hampton Inn in downtown Albany. On Monday, Dec. 12, we will let local Leagues know how many students they are allowed to attend. As a reminder, every local League who has informed me that they would like to send a student will be entitled to send one student. Then, we will take 2<sup>nd</sup> students up to our maximum of 60 students based on a first come, first serve basis as to when your local League told me that you want to send a 2<sup>nd</sup> student. We do maintain a waiting list, however, and encourage local Leagues to select alternates to fill spaces as cancellations happen. We always have some cancellations and will take students from the waiting list. The forms to be completed by the selected students and parents will be emailed to youth chairs in early January; those complete forms MUST be returned to the state office **by March 1** or the local League will lose their space and someone from the waiting list will be allowed to attend. If you have questions, contact [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org).