

# STATE VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy  
October 2021

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## President's Message

Judie Gorenstein, [judieL728@aol.com](mailto:judieL728@aol.com)

*"To every season there is a purpose"*

Throughout the summer and fall, LWVNY, local Leagues and League members have all been extremely busy registering and educating voters, holding candidate events and getting out the vote. With Election Day only a few days away, election season is almost over although there are still the voter service surveys to complete, evaluations to be done and ultimately the preparation for the next election cycle. Yes, voter service continues throughout the year. However, we are now entering the

season of Thanksgiving a time to give thanks. Here is what I am thankful for:

I am thankful to all our members, all our Leagues, all the wonderful LWVNY board and LWVNY staff for making it possible for us to achieve all we have done and all we are planning to do.

I am thankful for all our LWVNY committees who are enabling us to reach out to all our local Leagues. To our Voter Service Committee: I am so impressed by how quickly this year you have been able to update the toolkits, how you have been able to respond to concerns and questions from local Leagues. I look forward to seeing the analysis of the voter service surveys and plans for the following year.

To our DEI Task Force: I am so impressed by the number of members ( over 150) who you have reached and educated through the 2 DEI workshops you held and also the 21 Day Challenge many of our members participated in. I look forward to seeing and reading the "DEI Successes from our Leagues" you are putting together which will be on LWVNY webpage for all to read.

To our Local League Support Group: I am so impressed by how well you, a very new committee has formulated, distributed, collected and analyzed survey of what local Leagues need most: membership and how you have begun to review the materials available and what will be most valuable to our Leagues. As a result of your work, I look forward to your helping Leagues first attract new members and then involve and retain them.

To our Youth Committee: I am impressed by how well you worked together, some members of the committee with years of experience working with youth and other much younger members who can easily engage youth. I look forward to your working with our local Leagues, compiling and sharing what our local Leagues are doing, and to the Youth Corner you will have in the State Voter. Our youth are our future!

I am thankful that the future of LWVNY and our Leagues looks bright with so many motivated members.

I am also reminded that this is a time of giving. Let's all think about what we can and then give to the League: a donation, time, new ideas. We can and we will Build Our Power Together increasing our influence and visibility and reaching our mission and goals. Thank You!

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## Voter Services

Nancy Rosenthal,  
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A hearty "Thank You" to all the Voter Service team members, as well as to all the other Leaguers who stepped up to help with registering voters and

participating in our Get Out the Vote efforts for the November, 2021 general election. Many Leagues have held successful zoom, hybrid, and in-person candidate forums. Other Leagues canceled forums due to the unwillingness of candidates to appear, or candidates canceling after agreeing to attend. This has been one of the more difficult election cycles for many of us. Yet, League members again meet the challenges! All of your efforts are what continue to Make Democracy Work!



And, don't forget to share Vote 411 with family, friends and neighbors - get all their ballot information at that one place!

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## People Powered Fair Maps

Jennifer Wilson, LWVNY Deputy Director, [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org), and Milly Czerwinski, LWVNY Organizer, [Milly@lwvny.org](mailto:Milly@lwvny.org)

The redistricting process has been in full swing for over a month. Jennifer and Milly have finished their meetings with the local League redistricting delegates. Milly has been conducting individual meetings with the delegates who weren't able to attend the initial meetings.

We sent out a letter on October 18 to the Independent Redistricting Commission expressing our disappointment toward the separate map proposals and the lack of transparency and uniformity throughout the redistricting process thus far. The letter urged the Commissioners to release a single set of maps and to publicize their internal mapping negotiations to the public. We encouraged local Leagues to sign on to the letter and 35 Leagues did so.

On October 19th we had our first state-wide redistricting delegate meeting. Steve Elliot of the Albany County League presented his guide on how to look at a redistricting map. We also heard from the Broome Tioga, Saratoga, Albany County, Rochester, and Syracuse leagues on their efforts on educating the public on the redistricting process.

We held two very successful mapping trainings on October 13 and October 18. Over 120 people attended.

The IRC has begun their second round of redistricting hearings. As of the writing of this letter the Buffalo, Rochester, and Southern Tier hearings have all concluded. As of right now, the Albany County, Tompkins, Westchester, Syracuse, and North Country leagues will all be testifying at their respective hearings.

### The IRC wants to hear from you!

New Yorkers have the opportunity to submit their comments, testimony, and maps to the Independent Redistricting Commission **until Tuesday, November 23.**

Submitting a comment is a great and simple way to share your thoughts with the IRC! We encourage all New Yorkers to submit their comments on the two proposed maps. There are no character limits for comments or testimony – you can write as much or as little as you want, about whatever you want!

This can be done through the IRC website at [nyirc.gov/participate](https://nyirc.gov/participate). Comments can be written and submitted in the text box on the website or added on as an attached file.

Haven't looked at the maps yet? The IRC has an interactive map tool on their website. Individuals can compare the proposed maps with the current maps, view the population data of each district, and even look up their address to see exactly where they fall within the proposed district maps. [You can access that here.](#)

Want to know what to look for when viewing the proposed maps? Our Deputy Director Jennifer Wilson gave a presentation on how to analyze the drafted maps. [You can watch it here.](#)

There is no limit to how many comments, testimony, or maps an individual or organization can submit. Along with the public, we are encouraging local leagues to continue to submit their comments on the proposed maps and their versions of the maps - even if their hearing date has already passed.



### LWVNY DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) Task Force

Regina Tillman, [rmt371@live.com](mailto:rmt371@live.com) and Crystal Joseph, [campus@lwvnyc.org](mailto:campus@lwvnyc.org), Co-Chairs

A small but committed group of Leaguers from across NYS participated in the second round of workshops by Debby Irving, conducted on October 19th. The info was intense and engaging for the 80 or so that participated for 4 hours. And thus far, 80% of those completing the survey give a "strongly agree" rating to the statement that they would recommend Ms. Irving to other Leagues. Exit Survey responses also indicated that 80% of respondents felt more able to explain "white privilege" and 70% felt that they were more able to have difficult conversations about race.

Hopefully some will have been in attendance at our virtual DEI Drop-In Session that occurred on October 26th. Why?! Conversation helps to clarify and solidify the learning process. People can feel deeply shaken with the information that is conveyed. According to Debby Irving, "acknowledging and supporting that process is essential to the development and ability to stay engaged by [attendees]." We do wish for continued engagement and will establish DEI Drop-Ins as a routine part of the educational process on this topic.

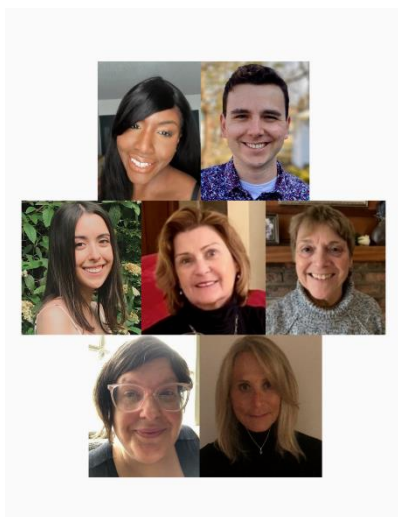
On behalf of the DEI Task Force, our thanks for the support from LWVNY and local Leagues to conduct these workshops! And to you - as League members - for your attendance since the first virtual DEI workshop in June 2021. We also acknowledge the follow-up engagements that have already begun to occur because of your heightened awareness and motivation to develop our organization into one which is more inclusive, more equitable, more multi-cultural and anti-racist.

From the 6 hours of workshops from August 17th and October 19th, plus any participation in the 21-day Racial Equity Challenge, we learned a lot of American history. As stated on Debby Irving's website page, we gave "a glimpse of what people don't know they don't know: many white people don't understand that the concept of race was invented as a political tool; most white people have bought into ideas about white people being smarter, harder working, and less criminal without understanding the history of that messaging; most white people don't know that when their family got the GI Bill, Black and brown families didn't; most white people remain completely unaware of what they were not taught in school or in mainstream media about the history of race in the US."

And as you continue to learn the unadulterated history, there are people being set up to attack local school board officials for standing behind the need to also teach our children the complete history of America. DEI is getting rolled up in some communities with CRT (Critical Race Theory), claiming it all to be divisive and, therefore, inappropriate to support let alone to teach.

We at the State League have taken note and will be providing you with information to help you "set the record straight". While good people must speak up against this misinterpretation, first you must have "the facts". In the meantime, please know - as starting point - that CRT has nothing to do with public school curriculum. In fact, I hope that you will be able to take 3 minutes to watch this video clip describing what CRT is and is not: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_gdxrkwpPKc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gdxrkwpPKc)

And I have included a video clip of less than 7 minutes interviewing Kimberlé Crenshaw, who was among the legal scholars who developed the theory, helping us to understand the true meaning of Critical Race Theory and how it became a political flashpoint in schools and beyond: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jih7ZbB8OLE> More to come.



## Youth and Civics Committee

Crystal Joseph, [campus@lwvnyc.org](mailto:campus@lwvnyc.org), and Nick Doran, [ndoran33@gmail.com](mailto:ndoran33@gmail.com), Co-Chairs

The Youth Committee (photo on left) is pleased to be compiling a list of all youth programs organized by Leagues in NYS. The list and descriptions will be shared with all local Leagues for possible replication. Each month, the Committee will highlight one program. Here's this month's!

### Teach Me to Vote/Take Me to Vote

This is a short video shared by our youth colleagues from LWV Saratoga County. The link to the video can be found here:

<https://www.lwvsaratoga.org/teachmetovote2021>

A short 6-minute presentation that discusses both ballot proposals and the importance of voting. Teach Me to Vote is a program promoted by the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County to help students learn about our local elections and voting. Funded by the LWV of Saratoga County, this video was produced and written by Suzanne Bishop and hosted by Lezlie Dana. As an effective, partnership /

collaboration strategy, the Saratoga League offers this video for distribution to school superintendents and teachers across the state of NY. It is also appropriate for a myriad of youth group organizations.

Continue to share your resources with both Crystal and Nick. As a committee, we are on the start to a wonderful election season with fantastic youth opportunities offered by all our local Leagues.

## Local League News

On October 14, the **LWV of Westchester** hosted an engaging conversation about *Lies & Liberty: The Future of Free Speech in a Divided America* with David McCraw, Deputy General Counsel and SVP at The New York Times, and moderator, Andrew Katell, Associated Press Journalist (Ret.) and news literacy trainer.

The 1 Person I Vote Coalition, The Capital Area Urban League, and **League of Women Voters chapters in Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Saratoga Counties** are sponsoring the showing of "Line in the Street" "Gerrymandering: What It Is and Why It's Important to You, NY State, and Our Democracy" All are welcome to join: **October 27, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**. Register Here: [tinyurl.com/Oct27LineInTheStreet](https://tinyurl.com/Oct27LineInTheStreet)

Co-hosted by **LWV of New Rochelle** members Tamar Tait and Nina Luban, *The Ballot Box* (monthly radio show) features local, state, and national electoral issues and relevant civic matters. On the October 20 program, Mr. Wegman will discuss the topic of his 2020 book, *Let the People Pick the President: The Case for Abolishing the Electoral College*.

The **LWV of Brookhaven** registered voters and gave out the amendment pamphlets at the Brookhaven Town Fair, and also at four libraries on National Voter Registration Day (Longwood, Patchogue, Bellport, and Sayville) and Stony Brook University.

**LWV of Rochester Metro Area** scheduled 22 virtual Candidate Forums for every contested election in Monroe County!

**LWV of NYC** organized *Oktoberfest – Voterfest*. The League partnered with NYC Trivia League for a special Trivia Night with a pub crawl!

**LWV of Saratoga** staffed 13 venues throughout Saratoga and Warren counties on National Voter Registration Day this year. Altogether, they had 18 voter registrations filled out at the time of the event, with 64 registration applications taken to fill out at home. Over 500 people were spoken to about not only registering but about the 5 ballot proposals and the redistricting information

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