



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 **July 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 or call 518-465-4162)

- **Complete and return an Updated Local League Contacts form (attached) with your new Officers and Board Members**
- Complete and return the Voter Guide Part II order form available in English and Spanish; email Laura@lwvny.org about other languages in which you would like it translated.
- Register to attend DEI workshop, *I'm a Good Person. Isn't that Enough*, Aug 17th on zoom (see below)

President's Report, Judie Gorenstein, judieL728@aol.com

Since the state League convention in June, the newly elected LWVNY Board has been working to ensure that we will be able to achieve our mission and goals. During the convention, you were introduced to the board, but I know over the next two years you will be hearing from them and get to know them. In August, (sorry it had to be postponed from July) there will be a zoom meeting for all presidents. In addition to introducing our new "Supporting Local League Committee" and how it can help you, we will be looking for presidents to share their ideas. This is going to be another challenging year, but we are gearing up to meet all the challenges. Our past year was successful in every way possible, but we are not standing still. We are looking to continue to grow

In late June, four board members, Nancy Rosenthal, Regina Tillman, Crystal Joseph and I, attended the virtual LWVUS Council meeting. The Transformation Journey that LWVUS began five years ago has been successful. Over the next five years, LWVUS will be working with Leagues on Building Our Power Together with a Women Power Democracy Initiative. The goal is to not only increase our power and influence, but also triple our membership. During LWVUS Council conducted virtually, those of us who attended heard what LWVUS had done and would be doing to help reach goals. In breakout rooms and workshops, we met with other state leaders and shared ideas. So what did I learn that I could bring back to LWNYS and our Leagues? ***READ MORE IN ATTACHED DOCUMENT***

Voter Guide Part II, Nancy Rosenthal, nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com

Voter Guide Part II will have some general info about registering to vote but will focus on the five ballot proposals on the ballot in November. There will be the description and actual language on the

ballot (both from the state BOE), and pros and cons of each proposal. This Voter Guide is for educational purposes and no League position will be mentioned in the Guide. The 5 proposals are:

1. Amending the Apportionment and Redistricting Process
2. Fundamental Right to Clean Air, Clean Water, and a Healthful Environment
3. Authorizing No-Excuse Absentee Ballot Voting
4. Eliminating Ten-Day-Advance Voter Registration Requirement
5. Increasing the Jurisdiction of the New York City Civil Court

The Voter Guide Part II will be printed in both English and Spanish and an order form is attached (and has been separately emailed to VS Chairs and Presidents). With grant funding, we are pleased to offer up to 500 English and 300 Spanish at no cost to the local Leagues (there is a shipping charge). Leagues may purchase more than that at \$.15 each in English and \$.18 each in Spanish. We are hoping to have them ready for shipping by the end of next week.

We will translate the Guide into other languages if requested. Email Laura@lwny.org if you'd like to have it in other languages and approximately how many you would want printed. We'll then see what we can do. We will have all languages available on the state League website. Order NOW!

59th LWNYS State Convention



While being held virtually, the state Convention was a tremendous success and we thank everyone who helped to accomplish this feat. The business of the state League was completed including election of officers and the board, adoption of the 2021-22 state League budget, adoption of bylaw amendments and approval of the 2021-2023 state program. All of this can be seen on the website at: <https://lwny.org/state-conventions-council/>

Congratulations to LWVs of St. Lawrence MAL Unit, New Rochelle and Albany County who each won membership awards for growing their membership during the last two years. Awards were also presented to local Leagues for their work on Getting Out the Vote (GOTV) and Redistricting. See all the winners at: <https://lwny.org/2021-convention-membership-awards/>

Recordings from the workshops, as well as Powerpoint presentations and materials are all posted on the state website at: <https://lwny.org/state-conventions-council/> Please feel free to use all of these resources and share with others!

LWNYS Ballot Committee, Laura Ladd Bierman, laura@lwny.org

The League has registered the LWNYS Ballot Committee with the state BOE. This registration permits the Committee to take action in support or opposition to the ballot proposals on the ballot in November. We will be supporting the voting reforms (no-excuse absentee balloting and same-day registration) and green amendment (clean air and water amendment), opposing the redistricting amendment, and taking no action or position on the NYC courts proposal. Plans are just beginning on what actions will be taken, but this will allow local Leagues to advocate for the voting reforms in particular, as they have requested. Palm cards for each of the proposals with the arguments for or against (not both) are being considered.

The Board also approved joining the Vote Yes for Clean Air and Water coalition which is supporting the green amendment ballot proposals. The coalition will be developing materials that we will distribute to local Leagues.

Advocacy: Sally Robinson, sally.s.robinson@gmail.com and Jennifer Wilson, Jennifer@lwvny.org

Redistricting

Commission Update

The Independent Redistricting Commission has finally established their website, hired their staff, set up their social media, and scheduled their initial hearings. The Commission has planned eight hearings that combine regions throughout the state. All hearings will be held virtually. So far, the Commission has held two hearings for Long Island and Queens. The Nassau League presented an excellent testimony at the Long Island hearing and I am still waiting to hear whether or not the NYC League will be presenting at the Queens hearing. All hearing dates and links to register can be found at <https://nyirc.gov/meetings>

PPFM Campaign Update

We are working on getting the word out about the upcoming hearings. We participated in a media roundtable for ethnic media outlets with the NYC Public Advocate's office and will be participating in a panel discussion on redistricting hosted by the Hispanic Federation and Latino Justice PRLDEF on August 25th – details to be shared soon!

We have also started our own testimony trainings. The first two trainings were held on July 22nd and July 27th. In total 143 participants took part in the trainings. All materials and a recording of the training can be found at the League's website nyredistricting.org

Election Law

Voting Bills Signed into Law

This month the Governor signed six voting bills that were passed this session.

- Eliminating Signed Absentee Ballot Applications and Allowing Absentee Ballots Postmarked by Election Day to Be Considered Timely (S.6429/A.6047-A)
- Allowing Voters to Request An Absentee Ballot Through Electronic Means (S.6379/A.6046)
- Requiring the Posting of Information About Changes in the Location of Polling Places (S.6216/A.2168)
- Allowing Candidates Who Have Lost Primaries to Be Removed from Ballots As Candidates for Different Parties (S.613-A/A.4142-A)
- Increasing Election District Registrant Enrollment from 1,150 to 2,000 (S.6855/A.7478)
- Conforming Deadlines for Mailing of Applications for Absentee Ballots to USPS Guidelines (S.264/A.5783)

We were supportive of the first two, which will codify the rules that applied to absentee voting during the pandemic. Unfortunately, he also signed a bill we were not supportive of, S.264/A.5783, which moves the deadline to request an absentee ballot from 7 days to 15.

The League partnered with VoteEarlyNY to support an amendment to the bill and move it to 11 days ahead of the election but we were unsuccessful. We will continue to work on amending this legislation next legislative session.

Hearings

The Senate Elections Committee has started to plan state-wide hearings on election reforms. They are specifically looking to hear from voters from these regions to help identify specific voting rights issues in different parts of the states. The first hearing will be held on July 28th in NYC. The other hearings have not yet been announced, but once they are we will help promote the hearings and encourage members and voters to testify at the hearing closest to them.

Ethics

JCOPE Reform

Although the legislative session is over we have continued to work with the JCOPE Reform Committee. After submitting letters to the Senate Ethics Committee requesting a hearing be held on reforming the Joint Commission on Public Ethics a hearing was scheduled for July. Unfortunately, that hearing had to be postponed because it was unclear whether or not the legislature was complying with the post-COVID open meetings rules. The hearing has been rescheduled for August 25th. The League's testimony is already drafted but has not yet been posted online.

Environmental Conservation

Vote Yes for Clean Air and Water Coalition

The League has joined a campaign to urge voters to approve a constitutional amendment to make clean air and water a constitutional right – the Vote Yes for Clean Air and Water Coalition. The campaign is being led by Environmental Advocates. This month we participated in the campaign's kick off press conference. You can find more information about the campaign at <https://www.ourairourwaterny.org/>

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Regina Tillman, rmt371@live.com

Speaking for our DEI Task Force members, **I thank all attendees of our first sponsored workshop, held on June 7th**, which advanced the understanding of “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” and what that means for our League. Plus, we had the opportunity to introduce the concept of our collective journey toward “a more inclusive and equitable organization”. Member feedback from over 150 attendees throughout NYS, through pre and post workshop surveys and Breakroom discussions, were highly appreciated.

I am excited to announce the next workshop, the first of two upcoming. The opportunity to access this caliber of educator was made available to us through the funding that a total of 9 local leagues committed for this purpose from the 2020 LWVUS Leadership Equity Grant. Members of your DEI Task Force and I have worked thereafter to coordinate the workshops with best-selling author and notable racial justice educator, Debby Irving. The first workshop is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 17th at 7:00pm**, entitled, “**I’m A Good Person. Isn’t That Enough?**” It serves as Ms. Irving’s requisite session for engaging in further work with organizations such as ours.

Registration is open to all members of NYS Leagues as the intended audience, with a deadline of August 15th to sign up: <https://imagoodpersonisntthatenough.eventbrite.com> .

We encourage local leadership to attend and to promote this to your members via email or social media. A flyer will be emailed out to you as well to assist in that endeavor. And please make known that if summertime schedules conflict, members should sign up anyway! They will have a chance to view the main portion of Ms. Irving’s presentation for up to 7 days thereafter.

An order form for **discounts on the Debby Irving book**, by the same title, will be made available the week of August 1st to local presidents. With a minimum order of 10 books per order, no shipping/handling charges nor tax is applied to the price of \$10 per book. This offer is made available to you through September 20th (in time to receive by our next scheduled Debby Irving workshop on Tuesday, October 19th. Save that date!)

The month of August will also see the LWVNYS DEI Task Force preparing to engage League members in our first sponsorship of a **“21 Day Challenge”** beginning approximately mid-September. It will be on Racial Equity and will include online “drop-in” times established during the Challenge to allow members to come together and reflect upon the learning options they are pursuing during each week while considering their potential impact.

Plus, in August we will begin to refresh the Task Force by making the annual solicitation for **nominations of league members to represent their local leagues** and serve on the DEI Task Force. Presidents are asked to submit their nominations to me via my email: rmt370@gmail.com, remembering that this work takes time, and courage. I do applaud those that were nominated last year and worked with me, and I do hope that most plan on continuing in the role for another year.

Students Inside Albany, Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org

We are excited to announce that the Students Inside Albany Conference has been scheduled in 2022 for May 22-25, 2022, at the Hampton Inn in downtown Albany. We are optimistic that we can have this in-person conference again next year. We will be sending the materials and details in September, but start thinking about how you will advertise for students or renewing your contacts in the schools. Watch for more info!