



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 **August 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 if you would like Korean or Chinese brochures.

Calendar (see more info in articles below)

- Sept. 9, 6:30 pm Zoom educational event discussing the 5 proposals on the ballot in November. Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kBeT7_PkR9WdZ0N0K6QJNQ
This is for all members AND the public so advertise and share with friends.
- Sept. 20, 6:00 pm Zoom for all Voter Services Chairs (link coming)
- Sept. 28, 6:00 pm Zoom for all Youth Chairs (link coming)
- Oct. 19, 7:00 pm Second DEI Zoom event with author, Debbie Irving, for all members.

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

Summer is usually time for vacations, but also time that Leagues prepare for upcoming year. This year as in past, we know already has many challenges. In June, we were pretty certain that COVID was declining and more events would still be in person. But even then we strongly suggested Leagues use hybrid methods. Now it seems imperative, that Leagues do this. In NYS we will continue with powering together to reach our goals and missions. LWVUS has set as one of their goals tripling membership in five years. Although this may not be a realistic goal for LWVNYS, we will be looking to increase membership, visibility and influence throughout our state.

So what is LWVNYS doing to achieve our goals?

LWVNYS is continuing to apply for and receive grants. Just last week, we were notified of a grant we are getting from LWVUS for redistricting

LWVNYS has hired a new employee, Milly Czerwinski, who will begin working for us on September 1 as a state League Organizer. She will initially be working with all Leagues on redistricting and, in areas where there are no Leagues, will be engaging with other organizations. We know that Jennifer Wilson has done a fantastic job offering workshops and providing information on redistricting and Fair Maps, but there is still more to be done. Jennifer Wilson is now working on materials for a

webinar on the ballot proposals which will be offered to members as well as nonmembers. This will be excellent opportunity to reach out to other groups and potential members.

LWVNYS Education Foundation is listing our building on Grand Street in Albany for sale and as of Sept 1 moving into a new space in Blake Annex in Albany. This is a new concept where nonprofits are leasing space to encourage collaboration among them. This will give us opportunity to network with many other nonprofits along with providing a safe, workable environment for our employees.

LWVNYS is expanding our use of committees. We now not only have VS committee, and a DEI task force but now have formed a Youth Committee. These committees will work with Leagues throughout state and offer zoom meetings so Leagues can share ideas and successes and work on overcoming challenges. In addition, we have now formed a new committee, Local League Support Committee. The committee has compiled a short survey that will be sent to all Leagues that will be used to identify not only areas that Leagues need help but which resources, training or services they would like LWVNYS to provide.

LWVNYS has not only printed copies of the Voter Guide Part II in English and Spanish, Korean and Chinese but translated it into Arabic, Karen, and Burmese. We are not only asking Leagues to reach out to new organizations and minority communities, but offering materials to do it. In order to build our power and achieve our goals, we need to look at everything through DEI lens. We need everyone's help in doing this. Local Leagues know their communities and surrounding neighborhoods. You know who is represented in your League and who isn't. LWVNYS is relying on local Leagues to let us know what you need and how we can help.

LWVNYS has held first presidents' zoom meeting this month and heard from League presidents not only what their Leagues were doing, but also challenges they faced. We will continue to handle these zoom meetings throughout the year to continue our effort of Powering Together: Increasing Membership, Power and Influence.

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

Has anyone else noticed the quiet August days of summer have been anything but for League?

The Voters Guide Part II which includes information (pros and cons) on the 5 proposals on the ballot in November is into its second printing and we anticipate more to come. We have shipped over 25,000 copies already. Thanks to all for making good use of this excellent guide on the ballot proposals.

Mark your calendars for a zoom meeting for the 5 ballot proposals: 6:30pm Wednesday September 9th. There is one error in the English version of the Voter Guide Part II that will be updated soon (Guide has date of Oct 26):

* Oct. 18 Last day for board of elections to receive application or letter of application by mail, online portal, email or fax for general election ballot.

The Voter Guide Part II has been translated into Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Karen, Arabic and Burmese. All of these are posted on the state website: <https://lwny.org/voting/>. Paper versions are available in Spanish, Chinese and Korean. Email Laura@lwny.org if you would like to receive paper versions. Because of grant support, we are offering each local League 300 Spanish, 50 Chinese and 50 Korean for free; more than those amounts cost \$.18 each. All will have shipping costs applied, too.

The Voter Registration toolkit is being updated on to include the new right on voting for parolees. The updated toolkit will be posted on the state League website in the next week. All of the toolkits will again be revised after the November election based on the results on the ballot proposals.

Local Leagues are entering Vote411 candidate and ballot information. Look for vote411.org to go live in October, 2021. Thanks to all for this valuable Voter Guide information.

Lastly, National **Voter Registration Day** is Tuesday September 28, 2021 (NVRD). If your League has not yet become a partner for NVRD, the link is here (<https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>). Each local League should become a partner and plan events on this day. 2020 saw a voter turnout because of events like NVRD. Let's continue that momentum by partnering again.

LeagueState Office, Laura Ladd Bierman, laura@lwvny.org

We are pleased to welcome our new Organizer, Milly Czerwinski (they/them)! Milly will be working to assist Jennifer with the People Powered Fair Maps New York campaign by helping to prepare local Leagues and the public to analyze the Independent Redistricting Commission's draft maps this fall. They will also be seeking new local redistricting partners throughout New York State and working with existing partners to deepen our work. Milly will be working with the New York State League fulltime and will serve as an organizer and liaison to our local League chapters.



Before joining the League, Milly served as a Communications Associate to the Office of New York State Senator Shelley Mayor. Milly has a strong background in communications and organizing and even served as a Student Organizer to the New York State Public Research Interest Group (NYPIRG) while studying for her BA in Literature at SUNY Purchase. Milly is a Hudson Valley native and currently lives in Troy. They are a big fan of NPR podcasts, baking, and crossword puzzles. Please join us in welcoming Milly to our team!

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

Kathy Hochul Sworn in As First Female Governor of New York State

This month history was made after former Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul was sworn in as the first female Governor of New York State. The seat change came after former Governor, Andrew Cuomo, resigned amid sexual harassment allegations following the release of an independent investigation conducted by the Office of the Attorney General. Following this report, the League issued a [statement](#) in support of the women who came forward to tell their story and calling on the Assembly to conduct their own investigation.

Prior to the former Governor's resignation, the League and our good government partners issued a [letter](#) to legislative leaders urging them to continue their investigations into the misconduct by the Cuomo administration - including the COVID nursing home deaths and the Governor's book deal; restore the Comptroller's oversight of government contracts; replace the Joint Commission Public Ethics (JCOPE) with a truly independent ethics body; and force Cuomo to refund contributions to his \$18 million campaign war chest to all his donors.

At this time, the Assembly has stated that they are suspending their investigations of the former Governor indefinitely.

People Powered Fair Maps

This month the Independent Redistricting Commission concluded their first round of hearings on redistricting. A huge thank you to our many local League members who showed up to testify about their district lines and communities of interest! You can find recordings of all the hearings on the Commission's Youtube page [here](#).

The Commission has not yet posted the transcripts of the hearings nor the publicly submitted written testimony to their website. This month the League called on the Commission to quickly publicize those documents so the public can have the opportunity to review them before maps are released in mid-September. The League also urged the Commission to share the transcripts in additional languages so that New Yorkers who speak a language other than English as their primary language have the opportunity to read about what their neighbors are recommending. Finally, the League urged the Commission to schedule open meetings of mapping deliberations so New Yorkers can watch negotiations of maps for New York State Senate, Assembly, and Congressional districts. You can read our full letter to the Commission [here](#).

Hearing on Reforming Joint Commission on Public Ethics

The Senate Standing Committee on Ethics and Internal Governance held a hearing on reforming New York State's system of ethics oversight and enforcement on August 25th. The League testified alongside our good government partners in favor of eliminating the Joint Commission on Public Ethics and Legislative Ethics Commission and instead creating a single independent agency, a Public Integrity Commission, to oversee government ethics violations.

Our written [testimony](#) called for an independent appointment process of Commissioners that includes a minimum diversity requirement so that Commissioners are representative of the people they are serving. The League also urged the Standing Committee on Ethics and Internal Governance to consider providing statutory language to ensure the new enforcement unit is fully funded and has operational support. You can watch the entire archived hearing [here](#).

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

Our thanks to the over 180 Leaguemembers throughout NYS who attended the August 17th DEI presentation by Debby Irving entitled, "I'm a Good Person! Isn't That Enough?!" *This presentation served as a lead-in to her workshop upcoming on **October 19th at 7:00pm. Please hold this date on your calendars!***

Other calendar items:

September 6th : If you attended the August 17th DEI Training, but not yet weigh in for post-presentation opinions and thoughts via our Evaluation Survey, please go to the following link to do so: <https://forms.gle/zBGRTJ6Kny4XmU4i6>

September 17th : Presidents also still have time to nominate a local board member or committee chairperson to represent your chapter on the State-wide DEI Task Force. Especially looking for analytic skills, excel software experience, graphic design and writing skills, however, all skill sets are welcome if the interest in serving is present.

September 19th : Upcoming "21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge" begins. Registration link will come out soon and we encourage wide distribution to members when it becomes available

September 20th : There is still time to place your League chapter's order for the Debby Irving book, "Waking Up White" at the discount of \$10 each. Minimum purchase volume of 10 books. Deadline allows your order to be processed and shipped in order to ensure your members are getting the book in time to read before the October 19th workshop:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJ1XDCapFQYrwjOXOV5QYeZfJhUKWNqz8rP5DT04ronDy4RA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

Challenges mount for DEI across the board! My co-chair, Crystal Joseph and I will be looking more closely at the CRT debate in support of those who are dealing with local school boards and irate citizens on this subject as brought up at Judie Gorenstein's President Meeting. Some of what I and the DEI Task Force will be planning on in the upcoming year or so include:

- More educational opportunities
- Establishing measurable indices of our successful movement as a State League into DEI
- Building a website presence on the LWVNYS webpage
- Development of an Organizational Equity Plan for the State League

However, we are excited about what the local Leagues are doing and will be finding ways to share that info. Thanks for coming along on this DEI learning journey with us!

Youth Committee, Crystal Joseph, campus@lwnyc.org

Welcome back to another school year. As we prepare to return to campus and school, I encourage each League to set the stage for strong partnerships, new ideas and build on collaborative ways to captivate our youth. One of the ways the state will assist in local League projects is through the newly developed Youth and Civics Education Committee. The goal of the team is to keep our organization moving forward by sharing what local chapters are working on presently and highlight newly developed programs. Additionally, team members will be in contact with Youth Chairs who have shared presentations or modules that were successful templates for both recruiting and retaining young people throughout our organization. My co-chair, Nick Doran and I, will facilitate a discussion on **September 28** on the team's structure, outcomes for the coming year and explain the ways in which our group can support youth leads. During the meeting, we will also provide updates for the youth leadership pipeline project, the Youth Civics Initiative (YCI) and let you know ways young people can continue to work alongside YCI while developing their advocacy and civic voice. Let's continue the great work and please stay connected with myself and Nick if you have any suggestions or would like to present your youth program to our team at the September meeting.