



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

State Board Updates **September 2021**

Local League To Do's (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- Complete local League survey (<https://forms.gle/9Bv76mYw3854WT3h6>) asap if you haven't already (one survey for each local League please).
- Complete and return the Voter Service Survey **by Nov. 12, 2021**

Calendar (see more info in articles below)

- Oct. 19, 7:00 pm Second DEI Zoom event with author, Debbie Irving, for all members (registration coming shortly)
- Oct. 23 Early Voting Day Sign up [here](#) for this national event
- Oct. 28, 7:00 pm Zoom meeting for all local League Presidents, Co-Presidents and Management Teams

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

Working Together: We Will Succeed and Reach Our Goals and Mission

As president of LWVNY I know Leagues throughout the state are extremely busy as they educate voters on the ballot proposals this year, hold voter registration drives, prepare for their very important candidate events, and strive to GOTV. This is in addition to all the other areas your individual Leagues work on. I cannot tell you enough how LWVNY appreciates all you do and is here to help you meet the challenges you face.

The LWVNY board held our training and orientation meeting on October 24th. Even before the training and orientation, the board has been functioning really well with each member on the board assuming their responsibilities and taking a very active role, each member dedicated to the LWVNY mission, and each member knowing the importance of working together with each other, with LWVUS and especially with all our local Leagues.

Already being a good board, we will be striving to be an excellent board. An excellent board is one where there is TRUST, one that is responsible and respectful, one that is accountable, one where there is open communication and one that is result oriented. The board of LWVNY is committed to showing trust and earning YOUR trust, being responsible and respectful to each other and to YOUR local Leagues, being accountable to each other, donors and YOUR local Leagues, having open communication with our own members, staff and YOUR local Leagues and working to not only achieve our mission but also to increasing membership, power and influence. We need your help!

1. If you have not completed the local League support survey, please do it now here: <https://forms.gle/9Bv76mYw3854WT3h6> . It will only take 5 minutes and will help us know what resources and trainings most Leagues find beneficial as well as what may be needed for individual Leagues. The next Presidents' Zoom Meeting is scheduled for October 28 at 7 pm. One area we will be focusing on is membership. As always we will also be highlighting Leagues who have had successes. Success begets success so it is always beneficial for others to hear and learn what has worked.
2. Let us know if you have any suggestions for LWVNYS. Attached to this SBR are LWVNYS' responses to the Directions to the Board presented at the 2021 LWVNYS Convention. However, if you have any suggestions or ideas of what else you would like us to provide or changes we could make, you do not need to wait to the next convention. Let us know now!
3. Continue doing all that you do, always mindful of our nonpartisan policy and now paying extra attention to DEI.

Together we will be able to meet our challenges and Power Together: Increasing Membership, Power and Influence.

Voter Services, Nancy Rosenthal, nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com

We are all gearing up for the League's busy time of year with the general election on Tuesday November 2, 2021. Many of us have been busily entering candidates' information into the League's online Voters Guide, vote411.org, as well as determining the questions for the candidates.

National Voter Registration Day (Tuesday September 28, 2021) was yesterday! **Don't forget to send us your photos from the day (email them to Milly@lwvny.org)!** We will be gathering them together to show our work across the state

On September 9th, the League partnered with Environmental Advocates, VoteEarlyNY, and the New York City Bar Association for a virtual educational forum on the five ballot propositions. We convened a panel of four speakers to discuss each proposal and lay out the pros and cons. The event had nearly 500 people registered but we only had around 260 participants. During the event we also promoted Voter Guide Part II which also explains the proposals and includes pros and cons of each and urged participants to visit the League's website for more election information. A link to the recording of the program is available on our website, <https://lwvny.org/voting/> .

On Monday September 20th, the local League Voter Service Chairs convened by Zoom to share how they are engaging voters: Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties MAL Unit and the "I Voted" program with kids and parents, and three Leagues on the "opportunities" candidate forums offer voters: Tompkins, Rochester Metro, and Port Washington-Manhasset. The recording from this event is here: <https://youtu.be/BGodHtkEAz8>

On the State website (lwvny.org) you will find the three recently updated Toolkits for voter registration drives, candidates forums and GOTV; use them as much as you can – they have lots of great ideas and samples! We will be looking to update them again after the election if the ballot proposals pass.

And it's almost Early Voting time again! The LWV is a proud premiere partner for Vote Early Day, which falls this year on Oct. 23. Vote Early Day is a collaboration among media companies, nonprofits, technology platforms, election administrators, influencers, and other advocates to

encourage Americans to vote early and often – and we’re [encouraging Leagues to sign up in support as well!](#)

Your Voter Service Committee is working for you, League members throughout New York State who are making democracy work. Let us know how we can help! Happy October everyone! Thanks for everyone’s efforts to register and educate voters!

Voter Service Survey

Attached is the 2021 Voter Service Survey. Please complete and return this survey **by Nov. 12**. We send it to you now so you can start tracking the data requested on the form. We use this information to develop resources and trainings and also to boast about the great work accomplished by our local Leagues. Please complete and return after Election Day.

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

Redistricting Commission Update

We had an extremely busy summer related to Redistricting. In addition to hiring our new Organizer (Milly Czerwinski), the Commission itself held public hearings in July and August but did not hold any public meetings until the start of September. At their September meeting they announced that they had hired two Redistricting mapping consultants - Redistricting Insights and Redistricting Partners. The also stated at this meeting they would release their maps and their hearing schedule at their next meeting. On September 15th the Commission released their draft maps. Two sets of maps were put forward; there was no specific discussion on the maps although it was obvious one was a Republican drafted map and one was a Democratic drafted map. At this meeting the Commission also released their planned hearing schedule:

Wednesday, October 20, 2021	Buffalo	Buffalo State College Burchfield Penney Art Center
Thursday, October 21, 2021	Rochester	Rochester EOC (SUNY UCAWD) Multi-Purpose Room
Monday, October 25, 2021	Souther Tier	Binghamton University (SUNY) Innovative Technologies Complex
Tuesday, October 26, 2021	Syracuse	Syracuse University College of Law Melanie Gray Ceremonial Courtroom
Wednesday, October 27, 2021	North Country	SUNY Plattsburgh E. Glenn Giltz Auditorium
Monday, November 1, 2021	Albany	University at Albany (SUNY) Page Hall
Monday, November 8, 2021	White Plains	Haub School of Law at Pace University Gerber Glass Moot Courtroom
Tuesday, November 9, 2021	Bronx County	BronxWorks Gymnasium
Wednesday, November 10, 2021	New York County	Hunter College (CUNY) Cafeteria
Monday, November 15, 2021	Richmond County	Catholic Charities of Staten Island CYO Center at Mount Loretto
Tuesday, November 16, 2021	Kings County	Medgar Evers College (CUNY) Founders Auditorium
Wednesday, November 17, 2021	Queens County	York College (CUNY) Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center
Monday, November 22, 2021	Nassau County	Nassau Community College (SUNY) College Center Building - Multi-Purpose Room
Tuesday, November 23, 2021	Suffolk County	Stony Brook University (SUNY) Charles B. Wang Center

The maps that were released were not in a format that was easily viewable by New Yorkers. The maps were compiled into individual Zip file that included images of maps that did not display street names

or anything recognizable to the average New Yorker. The other files were in formats only understandable by map making experts.

The League worked to transfer these maps into a more user-friendly format and created a Google map that included all six map drafts as well as the current maps for NYS Congressional, Senate, and Assembly districts. Milly worked to get all of these maps uploaded and organized and they were then shared via the League's social media:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1EREDwIGkL988fIMscjzItG1AodImPdQV&usp=sharing> . Use these maps to look at your own current district lines and the ones proposed by the Commission.

In late August, the League had sent a [letter](#) urging the Commission to hold public meetings on their mapping negotiations and to post publicly submitted testimonies and transcripts of their listening session and to make those materials available in multiple languages. We did not receive a response to that letter but the IRC did tweet at us that they intended to make those materials available.

On Sept 15 the Commission did post their received public testimonies but they have yet to post transcripts or make any materials available in other languages. We sent a follow up letter to the Commission urging them once again to publicize their meetings and to ensure greater transparency in future negotiations. We further urged the Commission to make their maps available in an easier to use format for New Yorkers and to release relevant mapping demographic data to voters could understand how these maps were drawn.

People Powered Fair Maps

Milly and Jennifer have begun meeting with local League redistricting delegates. A statewide convening of delegates was held shortly before draft maps were released. Steve Elliot, former LATFOR staffer and LWV Albany County League member, spoke to the group about the population outcome for NYS from the 2020 Census and gave an update on the Commission's work. After this meeting, we met with around a dozen local League chapters for regional meetings on redistricting. These meetings were scheduled for the week of this board meeting - at the time of this report we had met with 4 regions (Hudson Valley/Westchester, Central NY, Western NY, and Long Island) and had three additional meetings scheduled (Capital Region, NYC, and North Country).

We are now working to identify how we will be updating our redistricting materials to create new educational presentations to help the public understand how to evaluate draft maps.

Election Reform

The League was invited to testify at a hearing on board of elections reform in September. We [presented testimony](#) urging the legislature to prioritize standardization of election processes and ensuring greater transparency and accountability of county board of elections. The League specifically named the following four reforms:

1. Implementing uniform standards and practices
2. Standardizing staffing and salaries
3. Increasing transparency and accountability
4. And restricting the statutory requirement for bipartisanship in election administration to the minimum constitutional requirement

The League submitted our [testimony](#) and also testified in person alongside other advocate groups.

Ballot Questions Campaign

On September 21 the League announced our campaign on 4 statewide ballot proposals. The League will be opposing Proposal 1, supporting Proposals 2, 3, and 4, and taking no position on Proposal 5. Our kick-off event boasted 145 participants and we had Sally Robinson, VP of Issues and Advocacy, Kathy Stein, Member of the Environmental Conversation Issues Committee, and Kate Doran, Election Issues Specialist, speak about the first 4 proposals and our position on each. We then shared with members the materials we would be sending to local League Presidents and Voter Service Chairs.

The League has also produced a paper palm card that was sent to all local League chapters to use at their voter registration drives.

League State Office, Laura Ladd Bierman, laura@lwnvny.org

We have shipped over 29,000 Voter Guide Part IIs in English to local Leagues. We have also shipped almost 9,000 in Spanish and 600 Korean and 700 Chinese versions. On the website we have all these, plus Arabic, Karen and Burmese posted. We also created a flyer with a QR code that can be used at voter registration drives for people who want the link electronically. We continue to ship out more on request. We still have Voter Guide Part II available in Spanish, Chinese and Korean. Just email Laura@lwnvny.org if you would like a quantity.

Fund for Modern Courts

The state League has worked with and partnered with the Fund for Modern Courts for decades and we have always had at least one League representative on their board. With the passing of Helga Schroeder and the move of Libby Hubbard to MA, we no longer had a representative. We are pleased to announce that Laura Ladd Bierman has been elected to their board as the League representative.

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

Attendance of the President's meeting: conversation about school Board meeting disruptions indicated that the topic shifts over time from resistance to mask mandates to that of rejecting CRT (Critical Race Theory). Presidents asked for advice on how to deal with. After the meeting, Task Force Co-Chairs agreed between themselves to research for several resources on CRT to provide to League membership.

Membership invited to a 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge. Begun on September 19th with 74 League members. Registration ends on September 26th. A Facebook group created and entitled "LWVNYS DEI : News and Drop-In Zone" has 17 members currently to allow for written conversations of readings and activities with fellow Leaguers of NYS. Several virtual "Drop-In Sessions" are planned during the 21 Day Challenge to aid in processing the information, as were held in August for which members attending reportedly found value.

October 2021

The collective learning journey toward a more equitable organization continues with Ms. Irving's Part II and Part III of the workshop for the LWVNYS, scheduled for **October 19th**. Yet untitled, it will encompass portions of her cornerstone workshop programs: "Transformational Conversations - Moving from Fear to Curiosity" (Skill-Building); and, "Leveling the Playing Field: Interrupting Patterns of Power and Privilege (Alternate title: How to Explain White Privilege to a Skeptic). More

details on these established programs are included on the Debby Irving web page:

<https://www.debbyirving.com/keynotes-workshops/>

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force, Regina Tillman, rmt371@live.com and Crystal Joseph, campus@lwnyc.org, Co-Chairs

The DEI Task Force met with a LWVUS Board member and representative of the National LWV DEI Committee, at her request on September 9, 2021. Ms. Lali Watt wanted to gain a better insight into what was transpiring at our State's local chapters relative to DEI. We were thoroughly complimented after the meeting. A written report of the information provided by the five of the Task Force Members will be shared with all local Leagues soon. We hope to annualize the "Stories of DEI Success" reporting from thus forth.

Several new members will join the Task Force, and most having served in 2020-2021 will continue. We lost a few... to becoming their local league's president! An updated listing of members will be made available in October.

Our potential project list, in addition to planning and providing more educational opportunities, includes:

- Research and Develop a "Diversifying Membership" Tip Sheet
- Research and Develop an "Acknowledgement of Indigenous Land and People" Tip Sheet
- Website Page Development
- Analysis of Survey inputs from membership (total from 2 workshops = 184) and align with 2020 NYS DEI Assessment Survey Results (to be repeated in 2023)
- Research and Development of a set of Metrics for DEI
- Consideration of a LWVNYS Award Name and Criteria for local leagues to submit their DEI planning and accomplishments for recognition and acknowledgement (Biennial Conference)
- Fundraising via Grants and Sponsorships
- Develop a DEI 21-Day Challenge (or some configuration like 5 x 5 = five days x 5 weeks) for, and by, LWV
- Initiate "JEEDI for Change" (Collective or Individual League Member Action in the name of Justice, Empathy, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion)

Youth Committee: Crystal Joseph, campus@lwnyc.org, and Nick Doran, ndoran33@gmail.com, Co-Chairs

The Youth Committee met for the first time on September 28, 2021, to discuss the Committee's role and goals over the next two years. Co-Chair Crystal Joseph provided an introduction to the Committee. She discussed identifying regional leads and how the Committee should be used as a resource to hear and engage youth. She emphasized we need to hear the youth and make them feel safe so they can work for and alongside us. Co-Chair Nick Doran gave an introduction and discussed the virtual registration toolkit and registering college students to vote.

Laura Ladd Bierman, LWVNYS Executive Director, provided an update on Students Inside Albany. Each local League can send up to two students, with the first student guaranteed and the second student on a first come first serve basis. The local Leagues get to decide how they want to select a student to send to Albany. Please send Laura an email if you are interested in learning more at laura@lwnyc.org.

Additionally, Laura discussed the Civic Readiness Project being piloted in high schools. Laura also emphasized some of the important work local Leagues were doing and that we want to hear from them to share what they are doing for others and show off their accomplishments! We encourage everyone to keep sharing best practices so that we can update our website with youth resources/toolkits.

Each of the five (5) members of the Youth Committee introduced themselves. Unfortunately, Betty-Ann King could not make the meeting. Lindsey Houlihan introduced herself first and talked about some of the work the Westchester League was doing, including Running and Winning, which is a program other Leagues have run to introduce young people to candidates who have run for office. Jane Hatterer then provided some information on the Youth Civics Initiative (YCI) and its partnership with the League in NYC. Right now, they are looking for college students, preferably journalism majors, to help mentor high school students with crafting content for YCI and beyond. If you would like to nominate a student ambassador for YCI please email Jane Hatterer: janehatterer@gmail.com. In addition, Jane talked about her role in the Civic Readiness Project. Megan Nettleton talked about the programs organized in her local League, LWV of Tompkins County. Deb Cosher shared the prior successes that the Huntington League has had with both Vote18 and Vote 13. Laura brought up that the League received a grant to create seven 45-minute lesson plans for social studies teachers to use in their classrooms and will work alongside educators to both update and build out the module for high school classrooms.

At the end of the meeting, local Leagues discussed some of the programs they had worked on, while acknowledging the difficulties we have all experienced working with students during the pandemic. Many noted they had difficulty getting into schools or on campuses. Barbara Gundersen of Buffalo talked about the different PowerPoint presentations she shares with schools as an access tool to the classroom and said she would share the slides with the League. You can watch the recording here: https://youtu.be/_G4CIC_M4HY