

# STATE VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy  
September 2021

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## President's Message

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

September has not only been an extremely busy month for LWVNY and all our local Leagues and MAL (Member at Large) Units, but one where we have already accomplished so much by working together. Everyone reading this voter is a member of a League. Some of you may be very active and others not, but we all believe in the importance of what the League does to empower voters and defend our democracy. Our mission is more important than ever which is why I am asking, "Is there anything else you can do?"

- Do you have a friend, who might be interested in joining the League? ASK them if they are.
- Do you know anyone or are involved with organizations that can make donations? ASK them if they can.
- Do you have contacts with other nonpartisan groups who can network with the League? ASK your local board if they can.
- Do you have any extra time? ASK your board what you might do to get more involved.
- Do you have and specials interests or talents? Ask yourself how this might benefit the League.

Each member is important and can help us POWER TOGETHER: Increasing Power, Membership and Influence. Thank you all for being members of the LWV.

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## League Notes

### Website

The state League website will now have an ADA compliant button for anyone with visual issues. It will be located on the far right side of the homepage. Another way the League is reaching out to all voters in New York State!

### Fund for Modern Courts

Laura Ladd Bierman, LWVNY Executive Director, has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the Fund for Modern Courts. The state League has partnered with the Fund for decades on issues related to the courts. Laura will replace many past League leaders in representing the state League on this board.

### Democracy in Action: the Role of the Attorney General and the Public Good

The state League co-sponsored an event with the NYS Archives Partnership Trust last week at which current Attorney General Leticia James interviewed former Attorney General Robert Abrams. If you missed it, you can watch it [here](#).

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## Save the Date Tues., October 19

Debby Irving, Racial Justice Educator and author of *Waking Up White*, will lead League members in a second round of trainings on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The collective learning journey toward a more equitable organization continues with Ms. Irving's Part II and Part III of the workshop for the LWVNY, 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.debbyriving.com/keynotes-workshops/>

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## Voter Services

Nancy Rosenthal, [nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://vote411.org), as well as determining the questions for the candidates.

National Voter Registration Day (Tuesday September 28, 2021) was yesterday! Thanks to so many members who staffed a location to register voters! See photos below.

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/>. See the Voter Guide Part II in many languages on the state League website: <https://lwvny.org/voting/>

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## Legislative Update

**Jennifer Wilson, [Jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwvny.org)**

### Redistricting Commission Update

At the Independent Redistricting Commission's September meeting they announced that they had hired two Redistricting mapping consultants - Redistricting Insights and Redistricting Partners. They 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. See their website for the locations, dates and how you can present at the hearings: <https://www.nyirc.gov/meetings>.

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. These maps are available [here](#).

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.

### 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. You can watch the archive of our campaign kick off [here](#).

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## LWVNYS 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**

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 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 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.

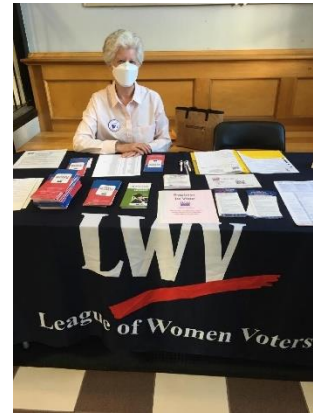
Each of the five (5) members of the Youth Committee introduced themselves. Unfortunately, Betty-Ann King could not make the meeting. Lindsey Houlihan introduced herself first and talked about some of the work the Westchester League was doing, including Running and Winning, which is a program other Leagues 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](mailto: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](https://youtu.be/_G4CIC_M4HY)

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## National Voter Registration Day September 28, 2021

Thanks to all the League members who were out registering voters! Here's a sampling of photos.  
Send your photos to [Milly@lwvny.org](mailto:Milly@lwvny.org).



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