



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*** **February 2021**

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

- Return proposed LWVNYS bylaw amendments to state League office **by March 1**
- Organize Program Planning in your local League and return completed form **by March 1**
- Return your local League response on the proposed Healthcare positions to the state office **by March 10**
- Select one or two students to attend the virtual Students Inside Albany Conference and have online form completed by the selected students **by March 10** (see info below).
- Ensure that the first three articles of the LWVUS bylaws are the first three articles of your local League bylaws (as required by LWVUS); see the LWVUS bylaws here: <https://www.lwv.org/League-management/bylaws/bylaws-and-certificate-incorporation>. Bylaw amendments should be adopted at each local League's annual meeting.

#### **President's Report, Suzanne Stassevitch, [smstass@mac.com](mailto:smstass@mac.com)**

##### **STATE CONVENTION!!!! June 7-12, 2021 Virtual**

The LWVNYS Convention will go virtual this year, June 7-12, 2021. Workshops and caucuses will be available Mon, June 7 – Thurs, June 10, 2021. The opening plenary session will be the evening of Friday, June 11, followed by caucuses and roundtables and plenary, Saturday, June 12. Saturday will likely be most of the day. Please start thinking about any caucuses or workshops you would like to organize or attend. Email any suggested topics to [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org). Registration materials will be distributed by March 7.

#### **Advocacy: Sally Robinson, [sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com) and Jennifer Wilson, [jennifer@lwvny.org](mailto:jennifer@lwvny.org)**

##### **Budget Advocacy**

This month the League advocated for funding for the Independent Redistricting Commission and elections in the New York State budget. The League submitted joint testimony on behalf of 21 organizations to the Joint Legislative Budget Committees on Public Protection calling for additional funding to be made available for the state's first Independent Redistricting Commission. Although \$1 million of funding was appropriated in 2019, those funds are not enough for the Commission to fulfill its constitutional mandates. The League also submitted testimony to the Legislative Budget Committees regarding the need for funding for the expansion of early voting and absentee voting. All testimony and actions taken are on the state website at: <https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/our-work/legislative-action>.

The League issued our 2021 Legislative Packet for members to advocate for funding for these issues. The packet also includes a summary of the Governor's voting reform proposals and our position on each of these reforms. A remote training was held on February 11th for members to review the

materials and provide tips for advocating while remote. The full packet is available on the state League website at: <https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/2021-legislative-packet>

### **Redistricting Campaign**

As part of our People Powered Fair Maps New York campaign, the State League has launched a new landing page for all of our redistricting materials [NYRedistricting.org](http://NYRedistricting.org)

This page will allow us to share educational materials, archived recordings of redistricting trainings and panel discussions, and any legislative work we are continuing to do related to redistricting funding. More materials will be added to the site in the coming weeks.

### **Engaging Communities of Interest Training: Wednesday, March 3rd 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

A community of interest, or interest-based community, is a community of people who share a common interest or passion. In redistricting, communities of interest are groups of individuals who are likely to have comparable legislative and community concerns based on similarities and who therefore would benefit from cohesive representation in the legislature.

Join us Wednesday, March 3rd at 6:30 pm for a train the trainer training on engaging communities of interest in New York State. Our training will discuss what communities of interest are, why it is important to engage them in the redistricting process, how to identify communities of interest, and how to engage them in the redistricting process.

After the training, the State League will provide materials to local Leagues for conducting their own community of interest training to begin engaging stakeholders in their community. [Click here to register.](#)

### **Senate Passes Bill to Restore Voting Rights for Individuals on Parole**

The Senate has passed S.830A, a bill to restore voting rights to all formerly incarcerated individuals including those on parole. This legislation would codify and improve an Executive Order put forward by Governor Cuomo in 2019 that allowed partial pardons to those who were on parole to allow them to re-register and vote. The Executive Order was limited in that each person would have to be regranted their voting rights by the Governor's office and would have to re-register themselves without assistance from the Board of Elections or another agency.

S.830A will automatically restore voting rights to justice involved individuals after they complete their sentencing. The legislation also ensures that there is adequate notice to the individual that their right has been restored and the opportunity to easily re-register as a voter. Now that the legislation has passed in the Senate it will have to be passed in the Assembly in the coming weeks.

### **Preparing Program Planning for State Convention 2021**

Attached to this email are directions to all Leagues on developing a State Program, i.e. any new issues selected for concentrated study, which positions need to be updated, and which existing positions are maintained for possible action, for 2021-2023. "Program" really means positions, so this is the time to determine which positions we want to keep, delete, update/revise or even consider new studies for new positions or concurrence with existing positions of other Leagues. We hope you will review our present program and recommend any changes through the process noted in these guidelines. After reviewing with your members, send the completed form to the state League office **by March 1, 2021**,

to be included for consideration at Convention. A full packet with more information and the return form are attached to this email. A 2020 Updated Impact on Issues can be found on our website at: **This is the only method for suggesting new studies to be adopted at Convention 2021 and the March 1 deadline for submission must be met. Changes in Program cannot be suggested for the first time at Convention for adoption at Convention.**

### **Healthcare Update:**

Each local League should be planning a membership meeting to consider the updates to the two state League healthcare positions. There are two new positions that the Update Committee proposes to replace the current positions (drafted in 1991):

- 1) Update of our Healthcare position and
- 2) Update of our position on the Financing of Healthcare

The materials are posted on the state website and all local Leagues MUST complete and return the form by March 10 to the state League office.

There is also one more statewide session to consider these proposed positions for members who couldn't attend a local League meeting.

- Tuesday, March 2 at 7:00 pm (click here to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sceuvsqD0tHt0SueJcD9KkTFdemK4ooQa>)

Members participating should review the materials in advance - click on link:

<https://www.lwvnyonline.org/advocacy/healthcare/2020/Healthcare-Update-Full-packet-for-FINAL-092520.pdf>).

### **Voter Services: Judie Gorenstein, [judieL728@aol.com](mailto:judieL728@aol.com)**

The Voter Service Committee is pleased to announce it has replaced its Road to the Voting Booth series with three new Toolkits:

1. Toolkit for Candidate Events: How to Hold a Successful Candidate Event
2. Toolkit for Voter Registration: How to Register Voters
3. Toolkit for GOTV: How to Get Out the Vote

The new toolkits are simpler and easier to use; they are full of new ideas and best practices to help you achieve your VS goals. They will provide League policies to follow, steps in planning events, and templates. They will incorporate information and resources for both in-person events and virtual events. They will include many of the successful project ideas that leagues have shared with us during the past year, along with contact information. The new tool kits should all be completed by the middle of March and will be emailed to VS chairs and presidents as well as posted on our webpage. We look forward to hearing your feedback once you receive them. As always, working together we can achieve so much.

### **Students Inside Albany Conference: Laura Ladd Bierman, [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org)**

We are excited to announce that the 2021 Students Inside Albany (SIA) Conference will happen – just not in the format as it has in the past. The Conference will be a virtual event this year held on **Friday, May 21st from 4:00-6:00 pm, and on Saturday, May 22nd from 10:00 -4 :30 pm.**

Each local League is encouraged to select two high school students to attend this virtual conference at no charge to the students or the local Leagues. While the program is free for students to attend please note that the State League still will incur some expenses affiliated with this conference and *we would greatly appreciate any small donations from local Leagues to cover these costs*. Students selected should complete the online registration form at: <https://forms.gle/VM5DLJ4BbtG7ymU78> by March 10.

### **Youth and Civics: Crystal Joseph,**

To celebrate Black History Month, please take a moment to review Gloria J. Browne-Marshall's, "The Voting Rights War: The NAACP and the Ongoing Struggle for Justice." Gloria speaks nationally on America's history of voter suppression and in this text, she examines African-Americans and their courage in the face of vestiges of race-based legal oppression.

### **Mending the Fabric of Democracy**

The state League is pleased to partner with the statewide Democracy Ready NY coalition to promote a four-part civic learning webinar series in March: *Mending the Fabric of Democracy*. This series is open to all people who are interested in learning more about civics education and youth engagement.

The 4-part series is being held on four Thursdays in March:

- March 4: Developing Media Literacy: Teaching Students to Know Fact from Fiction
- March 11: Discussing Controversial Issues: When Classrooms Are Contentious
- March 18: Igniting Youth Civic Action: Making a Difference In and Out of School
- March 25: Call to Action: A Conversation with Leaders and Decision-makers

Need reasons to attend?

- Learn about students' right to an education that prepares them for civic participation.
- Gain knowledge about essential components of civic education: media literacy, discussion of controversial issues, and youth civic action—and develop an enhanced vision of civic readiness.
- Support youth leadership.
- Identify ways to advocate for robust and equitably available civic education.
- Understand the urgency for advancing youth civic development and civic education equity.
- Make your voice heard by policymakers, advocates, and other influencers.

For more information about speakers and to register to attend, click here:

<http://www.democracyreadyny.org/events/>

Additionally, if you know of young people who want to participate directly on closing the education equity gap in NY State, please encourage them to join the Fund(ED)NY Campaign. Click here for more information:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QH3sFqKfXBs5tJ0NjDPlsirhV6SfCxH5tmxWnlUqgd0/edit>

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Regina Tillman, rmt370@gmail.com**

As I discuss Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within various groups and audiences, I am struck with the fact that the inherent meaning of these words, relative to organizational practices, is not conveyed fully just by their utterance. Perhaps hearing a few illustrations – versus reading about them – could assist in enhancing the learning. In aid of that, I can offer a recent taping.

Invited to speak in mid-February on a LWV New Rochelle podcast (Westchester County, NY) the hosts of the “Ballot Box”, Tamar Tait and Nina Luban, asked me to describe DEI. Afterward, they expressed the feeling that I had presented a visualization of the terms Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in a way that made their meaning very clear to them. See if you agree!

The hyperlink I include here will direct you to the podcast (without commercial interruptions):

[https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-f6phn-fb03d8?utm\\_campaign=w\\_share\\_ep&utm\\_medium=dlink&utm\\_source=w\\_share](https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-f6phn-fb03d8?utm_campaign=w_share_ep&utm_medium=dlink&utm_source=w_share)

In the meantime, where are you with your personal understanding of DEI, or the understanding held by your Board? Do you have any burning questions at this point, or challenges in discussing DEI with your fellow leaguers or even with friends or neighbors? Send me a message with your question and I will add it to our LWVNYS DEI Task Force topic listing to research the best answer and get it to you. Plus, Q&A will be one of the features on a new DEI webpage on the State League’s website and will be coming soon!

Let us hear what might be of help for you to know more about related to DEI, by emailing me at [rmt370@gmail.com](mailto:rmt370@gmail.com) with “DEI Question” in the subject line. And please do not forget about using the LWVUS website as a resource for info and webinars on the subject. It hosts 5 learning modules that are really excellent for your individual learning or for use in guiding your new DEI teams as well as your BOD. Leadership engagement is absolutely essential if there are changes to be made in the culture and practices within the LWV.