



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***  
**March 2021**

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

- Register your delegates for State Convention by May 1 to obtain the rate of \$50; \$75 after May 1
- Complete and return the order form (attached) for Voter Guide Part I – see new format attached!

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



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

The Call to Convention and the Registration Kit were emailed to all members this week and emailed directly to all local League Presidents as well. The Convention is being held June 7-12, 2021.

On Monday-Thursday evening, we will offer a number of workshops and caucuses – topics, times and days still TBD. On Friday at 5:30, plenary will open and then Dr. Turner, LWVUS President, will address the group at 6:00, with delegates returning to plenary after that. On Saturday morning, there will be some more workshops, primarily on the items to be voted on during plenary, eg, budget. And plenary will continue and finish on Saturday

afternoon.

All members are welcome at any of the workshops and caucuses, but can only observe during plenary. The registration fee is \$75 per person for delegate or visitor (\$50 if they pay before May 1) or for \$100, they will be registered and we will mail them copies of the two history books on the state and local Leagues. A Pre Convention Kit will be available in early April which will included the Proposed Budget, Nominating Committee slate, Proposed Bylaw Amendments and Proposed Program planning.

Attached is a chart with the number of delegates each local League is entitled to. Choose your delegates and get them registered online at: [https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/ZpfeEihvqiA-AOCUoRKMq](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/ZpfeEihvqiA-AOCUoRKMq) or use the attached form to mail in with a check. Also, encourage all members to join!

The next Presidents' Call will be on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

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

**Proposed Healthcare and Financing Healthcare Updated Positions**

At its meeting on March 20, 2021, the Board approved the adoption of the proposed updates to the Healthcare and Financing Healthcare positions. Thirty-one (31) local Leagues held meetings to consider the proposed positions and returned the forms to the state office. According to the new procedures, the responses from local Leagues were weighted by the number of participants at the meeting multiplied by 1.5. Individuals could also

submit responses if they could not or did not attend a local League meeting by participating in a group discussion on the proposals and submitting a response. We had 7 individuals submit their responses.

The responses also met the required geographic distribution and number of Leagues required to participate. With these calculations, there were 645 approvals for the proposed update on the Healthcare positions, with one disapproval. On the Financing Healthcare proposed position, there were 621 approvals for the proposal, 24 with no consensus and one disapproval. Both proposals, therefore, passed and the Board voted to accept these updates. The new positions take effect immediately.

### **Pre-Budget Advocacy Summary and Budget Update**

We received pre-budget advocacy reports from 11 local Leagues who met with 26 Senators and Assembly Members. Through these grassroots meetings we were able to learn that the Assembly had circulated two sign on letters regarding funding for elections and funding for the Independent Redistricting Commission. Members also received helpful comments from Legislators about what some of the concerns were around funding for these two issues.

On Saturday, March 13th the two one-house budgets were released. Our work paid off and funding was included for both state and county board of elections for implementation of early voting and no-excuse absentee voting, and for the Independent Redistricting Commission.

### **Elections Funding in One House Budgets**

The Assembly included an additional \$2,067,000 for personal services under Regulation of Elections. The Senate included an additional \$1,500,000 for personal service and \$500,000 for additional contractual services. The Assembly proposal also includes an additional \$30 million; with at least \$23.5 million targeted to county boards of elections and \$6.5 million for the State Board. The Senate proposal includes an additional \$4 million for use by county boards of elections for reimbursement of expenses related to early voting.

#### **Redistricting Funding in One House Budgets**

The Assembly one house includes \$7 million for the Commission as part of their budget proposal. The Senate one house includes \$4 million for the Commission as part of their budget proposal.

We have issued an action alert via email and social media and will continue to urge members to contact their legislators to ensure funding for both initiatives is included in the final budget.

Thank you to all the Leagues who met with legislators on these two funding issues! It is because of their hard work that these issues were included in the one-house budgets.

### **Redistricting Campaign**

#### **Engaging Communities of Interest Training Recap**

We had 116 members join us for our Community of Interest Training. The archived recording is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IMi8PY9FG8> We had a lot of good questions from our participants. The PowerPoint for public training purposes is available on our new Google Drive that is specifically for League Redistricting Delegates who are working with us on this issue.

#### **Mapping Software Training**

We have been promoting mapping software training to all members who are interested in learning more about these different options. Districtr held multiple trainings this month and will hold additional trainings in April which we have been promoting. We have also scheduled a trainer from Representable to host a training on March 24th for our members. We will be recording this meeting and uploading it to our [nyredistricting.org](http://nyredistricting.org) page.

## **Day of Action Plans**

LWVUS is urging all Leagues to hold a Day of Action on redistricting on April 29th. In New York State, we will be organizing a Virtual People's Hearing and inviting members of the public and our partner organizations to "testify" about why redistricting matters to them and their community. We will be inviting members of the Legislature and the full Redistricting Commission to watch this webinar. The League will collect written comments from anyone who wished to provide them to share with both the Legislature and the Commission

The People's Hearing will also be allowing public participants to provide up to 2 minutes of oral comments during the hearing. Testifiers will be selected on a first come, first serve basis, with the hope and intention of getting input from all over the state. The hearing will take place on April 29th, from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm and will be available via Zoom webinar. We will have a registration link and promotional materials available by April 1st.

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

Hurray! The voter service committee has completed three toolkits:

A Toolkit for Voter Registration Drives: How to Organize a Successful Voter Registration Drive

A Toolkit for Candidate Events: How to Hold a Successful Candidate Event

A Toolkit for GOTV: How to Successfully Get Out the Vote

These toolkits replace The Road to the Voting Booth. As promised, they are simpler and easier to use. Each toolkit has a table of contents and incorporates information and resources for both in-person and virtual events. Each toolkit provides Leagues with policies to follow, steps to plan, as well as templates and resources. Thank you, our local Leagues, ILOs and MALS for sharing your ideas and successes with us! These toolkits already are on the state League's webpage and are attached.

Each toolkit also incorporates the importance of DEI as well as data collection. Each toolkit ends with a metrics chart that can be used when completing an activity and then summarized for the voter service survey sent out by LWVNYS at the end of the election cycle.

Voter Guide Part I is also attached and on our webpage. An order form is also attached. The cost is \$6 per 100 or \$5 per 100 if you pay through your grants management account. It too has been streamlined and we believe easier to use. We will be scheduling a zoom meeting in April for VS chairs and those on your committee so that once again we are all working together. Together we can and we will achieve our mission of registering, education and GOTV.

## **Students Inside Albany Conference: Jennifer Wilson, [Jennifer@lwny.org](mailto:Jennifer@lwny.org)**

Our Students Inside Albany Conference will be held virtually this year on Friday, May 21st from 4:00-6:00 pm, and on Saturday, May 22nd from 10:00 -4 :30 pm. The students will still learn about state government and how to influence public policy decision-making and will still meet and talk with legislators about issues.

We currently have 58 students registered who represent 33 local Leagues. We have identified the students' legislators and will be sending out invitations to a limited number of State Senators and Assembly Members to invite them to participate in the program. Meetings with legislators will be held via Zoom breakout room.

## **Youth and Civics: Crystal Joseph, **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 last webinar is tomorrow (Thursday at 4:00).

## March 25: Call to Action: A Conversation with Leaders and Decision-makers

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

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

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

I am pleased to announce that 14 leagues across NYS, through the efforts of their Board of Directors or local DEI Committees, and inclusive of the State Board, have completed a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Assessment Survey. Although, ideally, the LWVNYS DEI Task Force would desire more submissions in the face of the 40+ NYS leagues available, this was by no means an insignificant undertaking.

Who had I asked to complete the survey? I had only asked the leagues with a representative on the State Task Force because those Task Force members had an immediate outlet to address any concerns or issues arising, through our meetings or via Slack. I could assure them directly that their league's journey toward a routine practice of inclusion and equity had been enriched by the conversations that produced their survey responses. It may not feel like that while the survey was being administered. There were some hard conversations out there, and some may have walked away feeling defeated in an effort they have not yet even begun to engage in fully. Nevertheless, your State DEI Task Force representatives have acknowledged that the changes toward implementation of DEI must be considered "a journey". And the journey starts with an awareness that one needs to move systematically from point A to point B. With our collective "eyes on the prize", we are also preparing tools to help you gain an awareness that will lend itself to sustaining progress. We plan to provide information that will help you to shore up your knowledge as to why we are "in this place" of so much hatred in our country. Then, we will make recommendations as to what will make the journey smoother for you, personally and as a league chapter. Discomfort will be a part of the path we tread. But, as Leaguers, we can and will persevere to make our country a place where true democracy is practiced by the generations to come.

In the meantime, the results of the DEI Assessment Survey which was conducted over the past several months, will be reviewed by the Task Force and then shared in order to:

- Create a state-wide Equity Plan and insert relevant language into the state's Strategic Plan;
- Share with potential guest speakers/DEI educators to assist them in developing presentations that meet our needs;
- Share with all local leagues in aid of them starting to create their own local DEI Strategic/Action plans.

Please be sure to join us at the LWVNYS Conference in June for our very first of many workshops to come that are designed for our NYS leagues. And when our DEI web page goes up shortly, please do let us know which of the featured content pieces work well for your journey. Until then, check out the Learning Guides which have been established by LWVUS to assist in your growth and development in DEI, as well as the application of DEI to all of your league work: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/dei-guide/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-guide-intro>