

having time to ask questions and discuss them has a bigger impact than just reading a list. This was exemplified when a member of the LWV of Oneonta was given time to explain their Reducing Polarization Group, a topic that is so relevant today and can certainly attract new members and engage existing ones.

Further discussion on this and the other ideas can happen at the **LWVNYS convention on June 2nd-4th** either during some workshops or in informal conversations while delegates network with each other. All presidents were encouraged to have delegates register for this convention and also to apply for awards. The real success of the convention depends on participation. It is our goal that all Leagues will send at least one delegate.

This was the last presidents' call with the 2012-2023 board. Since timely assessments of what we do are always valuable in moving forward, there were a few minutes left for feedback concerning the presidents' calls. One recommendation for future presidents' meetings was to have an agenda emailed prior to meeting being held. I am sure that there may be other recommendations, so please if you have suggestions email judiel728@aol.com with them. If you were unable to attend, this as prior meetings have been recorded and can be seen at: <https://llyoutu.be/JrDMLoKIZ8E>

As you read this SBU, you will see how LWVNYS is continuously working with not only our local Leagues but also with LWVUS. We are actively involved in engaging with LWVUS in the Transformation Working Groups. Ayo Atterberry, Chief of Culture at LWVUS, will be speaking at our convention on Sunday morning on the Future of the League. We network with other good government groups when making policy statements and also advocating and lobbying.

We hope that members from all over the state come to **Advocacy Day on Albany 2ⁿ** to not only learn about important issues, but get the opportunity to lobby your state legislators. We are also looking forward to your students attending our **SIA program on May 21-24**. Our youth are our future and SIA is a wonderful program to educate and engage our youth. We continue to help our local Leagues, publicizing their programs, an excellent example being LWV of Rochester's excellent 2 part webinar "What Do NY Kids Learn about Our Racist History? And What Do You Know?" We all can learn from one another. No one League needs to or should do everything all alone. Our mission of defending democracy and empowering voters is crucial. We will continue to work together to move forward.



LWVNYS Convention is Coming! Who has some great programs that should be honored? Submit an award application.

The LWVNYS Biennial Convention will be held on **June 2-4, 2023** at the Crowne Plaza Albany – Desmond Hotel (yes, it'll be an in-person Convention). The Registration Kit and the Pre Convention Kit are available, has been emailed to all Presidents and are posted on the state website. Deadline for registrations with the early bird special rate is May 20! Hotel room block ends May 25 ([click here to make a hotel reservation](#)).

Register online at:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/UwzMev163ozyAruVNgXTjw

The Agenda for the Convention is as follows:

Pre-Convention (separate registration and fee)

Friday, June 2

2:00 – 4:30	Speaker and Workshop: Libby Post, President of Progressive Public Affairs and Government Relations at Communication Services
5:00 – 6:30	Welcome reception
9:00 – 10:00	Evening information sessions/caucuses

Convention

Saturday, June 3

8:30 – 10:00	Workshops
10:15 – 11:30	Workshops
12:00 – 1:30	Lunch with speaker: Former Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney
1:45 – 5:00	Plenary Session
5:30 – 6:30	Reception
6:30 – 8:30	Dinner with awards
8:30 – 9:30	Evening information sessions/caucuses
9:30 – 10:30	Evening information sessions/caucuses

Sunday, June 4

7:30 – 8:45	Breakfast: New Local League Presidents
7:30 – 8:45	Non-President Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00	Speaker: Ayo Atterberry, LWVUS Chief of Culture
10:00 – 12:00	Plenary Session

AWARDS

Boast about an event, activity or accomplishment that your local League did this year by submitting an application for an **Award** at the state Convention. There are seven categories of awards and you can submit applications to as many as you want – we know that you’ve all done lots of great projects so submit for any and all! Let’s hear about your great project and honor those who made it all happen in your local League. Submit the application (attached) **by May 1**. Winners will be announced at the Saturday evening banquet at the state Convention. Award categories are below but see criteria for determining winners and application attached.

Empowering Voters:

1. Educating Voters to Action Award (Citizen Education)
2. Mobilizing Democracy into Action Award (Get Out the Vote)

Strengthening Your League:

1. Lighting the Way Award (Membership and Leadership)
2. Building Bridges to Excellence Award (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)
3. Thinking Out of the Box

Defending Democracy:

1. Shaping Our Future Award (Youth Award)
2. Inspiring Citizens into Action Award (Citizen Engagement)

Also, we would like to create a slide show of local League work to present at Convention. Please **send any photos of events, activities, rallies, etc**, that you hosted during the past two years and we'll add them. Send the photos to Milly@lwny.org. Thanks!

State Office

Local League Update Form

As you are holding annual meetings and electing new or reelecting officers and board members, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED LOCAL LEAGUE UPDATE FORM. The email lists for the different portfolios, eg, voter services, advocacy, etc, are created from the information on this form. You won't receive the key information from the state League if we don't know who to send it to. So, please have someone complete the form (ask the new officers if you are not returning) and return it to Aimee@lwny.org or complete the form online at <https://forms.gle/dvw2KDchZXTRsMbXA>.

LWVUS Data Tracking

I assume you all have a lot to report again now – between educational meetings for members and/or the public, candidate events, etc, please share the numbers and details! Be sure to complete the form for your March activities **by May 10** online at: <https://forms.gle/jvvf1kFwbGC8QDsX7>. And, let's see if we can get more Leagues and even more data to show our tremendous impact in our communities!

Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy,
sally.s.robinson@gmail.com, and Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Deputy Director,
Erica@lwny.org

LWVNYS Advocacy Day

Date and Time: May 2, 2023 from 9:30am-4:00pm

Where: The Blake Annex, 1 Steuben St, Albany NY 12203

Register: [Register online here](#) or mail a check made out to the League of Women Voters of New York State to 1 Steuben St, Albany NY 12203

Cost: \$20 per person

LWVNYS will host an advocacy day on May 2nd in Albany, NY. Join us!

- Learn about important legislative issues and how to advocate for them
- Meet new League members from across the state
- Lobby your representative at the Capitol
- Enjoy lunch provided by LWVNYS

League members are asked to make their own appointments with legislators and schedule them for 1:30 pm at the earliest. We will walk up to the Capitol after lunch. Those without appointments may try to visit their legislators or join the state League staff in the galleries watching session. *We have heard of multiple other advocacy days happening on May 2nd so please reach out to your legislator sooner rather than later!*

Redistricting

Assembly maps, drafted by the Independent Redistricting Commission, were released on the 20th of April. New Yorkers had until April 1st to comment on the draft maps. The final maps were voted on by the IRC and passed with a 9-1 vote. The maps will now go to the Legislature for a vote.

Read more about the maps [here](#).

We responded to this news via a joint statement:

Yesterday, pursuant to court order, the Independent Redistricting Commission **voted** on “new” New York State Assembly lines. In response, Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause/NY, Blair Horner, Executive Director of NYPIRG, and Laura Bierman, Executive Director of League of Women Voters of NYS, issued the following statement:

“The Assembly maps drawn by the Independent Redistricting Commission are almost identical to the maps drawn by the Assembly already in place – showing that this whole process was a waste of New Yorkers’ time and money. New Yorkers deserve non-partisan maps not drawn by politicians who have their own stake in the outcome. We have long maintained that people, not politicians, should decide what the maps look like. If New York lawmakers want to respond to voters’ desire that this chaos never happens again, they must advance an amendment that enshrines a truly independent redistricting process into the constitution.”

In mid-April, New York Attorney General Letitia James and Governor Kathy Hochul filed an [amicus brief in support of efforts to redraw New York’s Congressional district lines](#) rather than leaving the lines drawn by a court-appointed special master in place between now and the 2030 census. The state’s Independent Redistricting Commission’s (IRC) maps were rejected by the Legislature and then the IRC failed to submit a second set of maps. The process was taken over by the Legislature and the Congressional maps drafted afterwards were challenged in the courts, resulting in a special master drawing lines ahead of the 2022 Election.

In the brief, filed in the Appellate Division, Third Department, Attorney General James and Governor Hochul assert that while the special master’s maps may have been appropriate for the 2022 Election, there is significant time for IRC to generate new maps and follow the process outlined in the New York State Constitution for Congressional maps going forward. *The League believes that redrawing the maps at this point would be unconstitutional. They should remain as is until being redrawn in 2032.*

Budget Delayed

Lawmakers continue to pass extenders to push the budget back. Recent reports lead us to believe that the budget may be voted on by the Legislature on May 1st.

Climate Legislation Under Attack

In early April, Senator Parker and Assemblymember Barrett, introduced [S6030](#) which would have a disastrous impact on NY State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The CLCPA measures greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions using a 20-year time frame. Heat trapping

methane emissions, which account for approximately one-quarter of global warming effects today, present the greatest planetary harm in the first 20 years after release.

This change would delay harmful emissions reductions and prolong unacceptable conditions that pollute, provoke extreme weather and could potentially trigger irreversible climate effects. The role of human generated GHG must be addressed aggressively and cannot be delayed. The NYS League strongly opposes the recently proposed bill and wrote a memo of opposition which you can read [here](#).

Later this week, the Governor announced that S6030 would be taken out of budget negotiations, but that does not mean that the bill can't move once the budget has passed. We will continue to monitor this issue.

Selection Process Changed for NYS Court of Appeals

Citizens Union, the League of Women Voters of New York State, and the Committee for Modern Courts, released a statement calling on the Assembly to reject Governor Hochul's proposed "program bill" (A5983/S06061) will change the selection process for appointing judges to the New York State Court of Appeals. This bill unfortunately passed in both the Senate and the Assembly.

If an Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals is appointed to be the Chief Judge, the Governor will be permitted to nominate someone to the vacant Associate Judge position from the list of recommended names that the Commission on Judicial Nomination provided to fill the Chief Judge position. This will heavily politicize a sensitive nomination process that centers appropriate qualifications for each Court position, and conflicts with the plain language of the State Constitution.

Here are the top reasons we oppose this measure:

- We believe this proposal would be unconstitutional.
- Associate Judge and Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals are two positions requiring different qualifications.
- This proposal would reintroduce politicization into a sensitive nomination process that should be left detached from political-horse trading.

Read the statement we sent yesterday [here](#). Read more about pushback to the bill [here](#).

Public Campaign Finance Rally

As a part of the Fair Elections Coalition, we held a press conference on the Public Campaign Finance program on March 30th. Legislators including AM Harvey Epstein, Senator Rachel May and others made statements in support of the program.

We submitted the following quote as a part of the press release that went out before the conference:

"New Yorkers have long been frustrated by the deplorable condition of our state's campaign finance system and the outsized power of wealthy interests in Albany. The task now before the legislature is to finish this historic improvement to our broken campaign finance system, a system which has for far too long undermined democracy and sown public distrust in government. Elected officials should be beholden to their constituents, not their large donors. The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports the new Public Campaign Finance Program and calls on the Governor and Legislative leaders to fund the

program and not delay its implementation." – *Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of New York State*

Voter Services, Nancy Rosenthal, VP for Voter Services,
nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com

Voter Guide Part I

Voter Guide part 1 in English and Spanish is available! Order yours for voter registrations and other upcoming events in your community. They are also posted on the Voting page of the state website: <https://lwwny.org/voting/>

Vote 411

The vote411.org training on April 13th was an excellent primer for your League's vote411.org. Getting started now is key to your League's success with vote411.org. Now is a good time for your Board to develop the questions for the candidates running for office. Having one person who is comfortable with the technology of vote411 and who will do the "tech" part (uploading races, candidates and questions etc) is something several Leagues are doing. Many people are afraid of the tech part, which is why they won't get involved. But if that piece is taken care of, then maybe your local League will get more volunteers. The workload can be spread out with other volunteers taking on other functions or tasks like looking for candidate emails, creating email letters to candidates, creating candidate questions for each race, publicity, etc.

Candidate forums will be happening for the primary and general elections. Here are some highlights from the candidate toolkit to consider as we approach Candidate Forums (<https://lwwny.org/local-Leagues/#tool>). If the forum is a League sponsored or co-sponsored event, your League policies and procedures apply, and these have hopefully already been developed and agreed upon by your board, including the empty chair policy. If the forum cannot occur, the empty chair policy applies; that candidate who does attend can, however, be introduced from the podium (but sitting in the audience), the moderator explains why the League can't hold the forum for that race, and then encourages the public to talk with the attending candidate after the event in the lobby of the facility. That attending candidate CANNOT speak from the podium/dais or make a public statement.

We encourage local Leagues to write LTEs, post social media (including calling them out on Twitter) or talk with reporters about how they had to cancel or cannot hold a forum because the one candidate would not agree to attend (yes, they can call out the specific candidate); they should emphasize that the forum is a job interview and that the public deserves to hear from the candidate.

Remember too that all candidates are included in Vote411.org, even if only one in a race responds – the non-responding candidate (who often is the same one who wouldn't attend a forum) is listed with a note that the "candidate did not respond."

If the forum, is NOT a League sponsored event, the League moderator must explain from the podium that this is not following League protocols and indicate who developed the procedures and rules – and League should not be listed as a partner or sponsor on advertising.

It will be good to see everyone at Convention in June!

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), Regina Tillman, VP for DEI, rmt370@gmail.com, and Crystal Joseph, DEI Task Force Co-Chair, campus@lwnyc.org

DEI Virtual Drop-In session is being planned for May 3rd at 7:30pm so we can share our feelings and impressions about the Antiracist Curriculum Project webinar info, along with sharing your thoughts about how it relates to what is going on in our country and the actions we, as a League, could take. [Save This Zoom Link to Attend](#). (FYI: No registration is required, and no recording is made.)

Please be sure to nominate your League in the newest Recognition Category entitled, Building Bridges to Excellence Award (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). Any and all efforts designed to bring about change should be considered. [Go to this page for the Application](#). *Due by May 1st*. Also, *due May 1st*, any outstanding local League submissions of their LWVNYS DEI Assessment Survey. Several Leagues were granted an extension to May 1st therefore stragglers, either as Leagues or as individual League Members, will also be accepted by, or before, this date.

[PDF of DEI Survey](#) (Keep for your copy)
[LINK for DEI Survey via Google Form](#) (Submit information)

Local Presidents are invited to consider the nomination of one of their members, assessed with possessing leadership qualities, to *represent your League on the LWVNYS DEI Task Force*. Consider current or new members of your BOD and Chairs of Committees such as Membership, Nominations, Advocacy and DEI. *Nominations should be made by June 30th*.

2023 Students Inside Albany Conference: Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwny.org

The 2023 Students Inside Albany Conference will be held May 21-24 at the Hampton Inn in downtown Albany. All local Leagues have been submitted the paperwork and we have our 60 students. Cancellations do happen (many have happened already) so we keep the waiting list and will let you know if a spot opens; please select an alternate student in case your first student cancels or if you're on the waiting list and are later allowed to send a 2nd student. All students and parents have received a confirmation letter; copies of the letter were sent to the local League Presidents and SIA Chairs, too. If you have questions, contact [Laura@lwny.org](#).

From LWVUS

Join the LWV Climate Interest Group

The LWV Climate Interest Group is a nationwide collaboration of League members working to provide local and state Leagues with information and materials on climate change. The materials help local Leagues in their education and advocacy work and assures that, as the League, we speak with one voice. [Learn more and join the group here](#).