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State Board Updates **February 2023**

The state League office has moved! Our new address is:

The Blake, 1 Steuben Place

Albany, NY 12207

(same phone, emails, but no fax anymore)

(mail to old address is being forwarded so no worries about anything already sent)

Local League To Do's (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or fax 518-465-0812)

- Submit your local League's program planning responses **by March 1**
- Submit any bylaw amendment proposals **by March 1**
- Submit student forms for 2023 Students Inside Albany Conference **by March 1**
- Submit data tracking form to LWVNYS **by Mar 10** (and the 10th of each month); questions attached in word document but must be completed online at:
<https://forms.gle/jvfv1kFwbGC8QDsX7>
- DEI Assessment Survey: Begin planning how to incorporate the DEI Assessment Survey into your Board business to derive a consensus and submit it **by April 1st**.
- Order 2023 Voter Guide Part I now for this spring and summer voter registration drives (see order form attached)
- Submit an Awards application to boast and honor an event, activity or accomplishment that your local League did this year (Awards form is attached)

Events Calendar

- April 20, 7 pm Presidents Zoom
- March 9 Public Campaign Finance Presentation, Rockefeller Institute, Albany or Live streamed (registration coming)
- April 12, 5:30 pm Vote 411 Training (registration coming)
- May 2 LWVNYS Advocacy Day, The Blake, Albany ([register here](#))
- May 21-24 Students Inside Albany Conference, Hampton Inn, Albany
- June 2-4, 2023 LWVNYS Convention, Desmond Hotel, Albany

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

February was a busy month for our Leagues. Many of you celebrated LWV's 103rd birthday with a Day of Action. Thanks to all the Leagues that not only planned events but shared pictures with us. Where was the LWVNYS on Feb. 14th? We were out all over the state.

Where will we be on June 3rd and 4th? We will be in Albany at our LWVNYS convention.. This will be the 60th convention of LWVNYS and our first in-person LWVNYS convention since 2019.

Hurray, it will be so good to all be together again in person. Of course, we were glad to have been able to hold a virtual convention in 2019 when COVID made it impossible to hold otherwise. Yes, our virtual convention was well attended and attendees did give us positive feedback. However, while there were some positives, an in-person convention offers the excitement, stimulation and energy when leaders from Leagues all over the state come together for two days to not only do the work of convention but also have time to engage and form bonds with other League members from all over the state This convention will give you more opportunities to network, more time to share experiences and brainstorm, and the opportunity to be part of this wonderful organization, LWVNYS. Those who have attended in person conventions I am sure will agree. Those who will be attending for the first time will see for themselves. Empowering voters and protecting our democracy is no easy mission but certainly attainable when we all work together.

LWVNYS has been busy planning for our 2023 convention: the workshops, caucuses, speakers, etc. Attached is the information about the League awards. Were you able to Empower Voters, Defend Our Democracy and Grow the League? Apply for the award(s) and then attend the convention so you can find out the results. In March you will be receiving the Call to Convention and learn the number of delegates you can send. It is not too early to begin to think about who will be yours. When you are selecting delegates, know it is great to have experienced board members but also to have newer members attend. Do you remember the first LWVNYS convention you attended? I do! I came away thinking I had seen Democracy in Action and being more enthused and committed to the LWV, eager to learn more and do more! Nothing can replace the experience of being there.

I know there is a lot that you all will be doing in the next several months (just read this SBU and the deadlines). I hope all presidents will be able to attend the next zoom meeting on Thursday April 20th at 7pm. All 5 regions will have held at least their first zoom meeting and we will be highlighting new ideas and successes as well as discussing convention. Thank you all for all you do.

State Office

LWVUS Data Tracking

Keep up the great work with data tracking! Be sure to complete the form for your February activities **by Mar. 10** online at: <https://forms.gle/jvfv1kFwbGC8QDsX7>. And, let's see if we can get more Leagues and even more data to show our tremendous impact in our communities!



LWVNYS Convention is Coming!

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).

We have started to make plans for the Convention and your local League should, too. The Registration Kit will be emailed next week so start thinking about who might represent your League.

If you have any suggested **amendments to the League's bylaws** (<https://lwny.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Bylaws-as-Amended-June-2021-Convention.pdf>), email laura@lwny.org by **March 1**.

If you have ideas for **new positions, updates to positions**, etc, make sure that your local League is discussing this and will submit the League's response **by March 1**. (see more in Advocacy below)

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. 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.

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

Budget Testimony

The League testified at the Public Protection hearing on February 7th. Here is what we asked for:

- \$20M in funding for county boards of elections
- \$5M to support the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act Database bill
- An additional \$75M to fully fund the matching portion of the new Public Campaign Finance Board

Read our full testimony [here](#). In addition to orally testifying at the Public Protection hearing we also submitted written testimony to the Elementary and Secondary Education hearing, which you can find [here](#), and the Environmental Conservation hearing, which you can find [here](#). We will also be submitting testimony for the healthcare hearing next week.

Legislative Priorities

We asked that all local Leagues submit their top three legislative priorities to the state League by February 1st. In total we had responses from 28 of our local Leagues. The feedback Leagues provided helps the state League decide which issues we will focus on in this legislative session. The results were tallied and weighted. The results are below:

1. Elections
2. Environment
3. Equality of Opportunity

Healthcare and good government came in as a close fourth and fifth respectively and will continue to be monitored for action by the state League. Elections and Environment both received overwhelming support.

Pre-Budget Legislative Packet

Last week we sent out the pre-budget advocacy packet to local League Presidents and Advocacy chairs. You can find a copy of the packet [here](#).

This year we are again providing members key information on issues of interest to us in the 2023-2024 state budget and asking you all to lobby your legislators on these issues. Pre-budget legislative

lobbying in legislators' district offices should be **scheduled between February 20th and March 3rd or as soon as possible after that.** This year our legislative packet covers funding for county boards of elections, the passage and implementation of the companion database bill for the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, funding for the public campaign finance board, an expansion of the bottle bill, and digital equity.

Though we are continuing to work on our other priority issues related to good government, healthcare, women's issues, and other environmental issues, we are not acting on these with relation to the state budget. Should these issues be advanced before the April 1st budget deadline, we will issue action alerts to all members through our social media and email. We expect that our legislative priorities not directly impacted by the budget will be the primary focus of our post-budget lobbying.

Upcoming Events

Public Campaign Finance Presentation

Date and Time: March 9, 2023 from 12:00pm – 1:30pm

Where: Rockefeller Institute, 411 State Street, Albany NY 12210 or join us virtually via Zoom

Registration Link: Coming soon!

In partnership with the Rockefeller Institute and the Brennan Center for Justice, LWVNYS will host a presentation on the new Public Campaign Finance Program. This will be a hybrid event and those who are interested can either attend in person or virtually via Zoom. If you live in the Capital Region, we encourage you to come join us in person at the Rockefeller Institute in Albany. Parking will be provided in Washington Park.

The program will be presented by the Brennan Center for Justice's Joanna Zdanys, Senior Counsel, Elections and Government and Hazel Millard, an advocacy campaign strategist in the Democracy project. They will provide an overview of how elections are currently funded, issues and controversies around money in politics nationally and the issues that current practices raise particularly in NYS and then share the reforms that the Brennan Center is supporting.

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.

Program Planning

You must submit any proposals for program planning to the LWNYS by **March 1st** in order for them to be considered for Convention.

All Leagues have already received the Program Planning Packet which includes directions on developing a state Program, i.e. any new issues selected for concentrated study, which positions need to be updated, and any existing positions that should be dropped. “Program” really means positions, so this is the time to determine which positions we want to delete, update/revise or even consider new studies for new positions or concurrence with existing positions of other Leagues. The Program will be adopted at the Convention in June 2023. Each local League should have a meeting to discuss program planning – guidelines for the meetings and more information about what to do is included in the Program Planning Packet. If you would like to submit a suggestion, please email the form included in the program planning packet to Laura Bierman at laura@lwny.org by **March 1st**.

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

March is a perfect month for local Leagues to review their policies and procedures for candidate forums and moderating League and events not sponsored by League. Did the policies and procedures work well this last year or do they need tweaking ? These policies and procedures are to be discussed and agreed upon annually. Also Leagues want to affirm their nonpartisan policy with the newly elected board. Having these in place will make it easier for Leagues to handle those easy and difficult events local Leagues may face.

It's time for local Leagues to plan Spring voter registration events, possibly also arranging with local high schools to educate and inform high school students on voting and registering them, and, yes, those 16 year olds now can be pre-registered as well.

Spring is around the corner and our voter service efforts are waking up for the upcoming election season!

2023 Voter Guide Part I

The 2023 Voter Guide Part I will be available in the next month. It will include important registration information as well as the dates and deadlines for the June and November elections. Plan ahead and place your order now for any voter registration drives you are organizing this spring or summer! See Order Form attached.

Vote 411 Training

Training on Vote 411 will be held virtually on **April 12 at 5:30 pm**. Come learn how the program works and start creating your page for the upcoming June primary. It's time now to set up the races, etc – come see how. Registration will be available shortly but mark your calendar.

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

It is gratifying to hear from some of our local Leagues that they are actively preparing themselves to review, discuss, and come to consensus on the **LWVNYS DEI Assessment Survey**, emailed to everyone on February 17th. And the membership has begun responding as well by submitting individual member surveys!

However, if anyone missed the email blast containing the links to the PDF version and to the Google Forms (used for final submission) of the LWVNYS DEI Assessment Survey, here they are for your retrieval:

[PDF of DEI Survey](#)

[LINK for DEI Survey via Google Form](#)

The DEI Survey submission deadline is April 1st. Your entire State DEI Task Force is looking for a good volume of feedback submitted, through Survey responses, to assess the impact of the past three years of DEI related workshops, discussions, readings, policy changes, programmatic efforts, and attention to behaviors. Again, there are no wrong answers! We only need your honest assessment and impressions to allow the formulation of next steps.

DEI Virtual Drop-In Meeting: On Wednesday, March 8th at 7:00pm. Discussion and sharing of what was learned in February, fielding questions about the LWVNYS DEI Assessment Survey, and more. No registration required. Link and enter passcode.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6200239891?pwd=THllWmV6WmozMWY1Z2tCNFQvV2tYQT09>

Pass Code: FUqNK5

2023 Students Inside Albany Conference: Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.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 informed as to how many students they can send. Cancellations do happen (two have happened already in January) so 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. The forms to be completed by the selected students and parents were emailed to youth chairs in early January; those complete forms **MUST** be returned to the state office **by March 1** or the local League will lose their space and someone from the waiting list will be allowed to attend. If you have questions, contact Laura@lwvny.org.