



The Blake Annex | 1 Steuben Place | Albany, NY 12207  
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## ***State Board Updates*** **March 2023**

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

**The Blake, 1 Steuben Place**

**Albany, NY 12207**

**Tel: 518-465-4162 (same)**

**Email: [lwvny@lwvny.org](mailto:lwvny@lwvny.org) (same)**

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

- Submit data tracking form to LWNYS by **April 10** (and the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month); questions attached in word document but must be completed online at: <https://forms.gle/jvfv1kFwbGC8QDsX7>
- DEI Assessment Survey: **Deadline extended to April 15<sup>th</sup>**.
- Order 2023 Voter Guide Part I now for this spring and summer voter registration drives (see order form attached)
- Submit an **Awards application by May 1** to boast and honor an event, activity or accomplishment that your local League did this year or even the year before – since the last state Convention (Awards form is attached)

### **Events Calendar (see more about each in reports below)**

- April 12, 5:30 pm Vote 411 Training ([register here](#))
- April 17 and April 24, 7 pm What do NY kids learn about our racist history? [Registration link](#)
- April 20, 7 pm Presidents Zoom
- May 2 LWNYS Advocacy Day, The Blake, Albany ([register here](#))
- May 3, 7 pm DEI Drop In
- May 21-24 Students Inside Albany Conference, Hampton Inn, Albany
- June 2-4, 2023 LWNYS Convention, Desmond Hotel, Albany

### **President's Report, Judie Gorenstein, [judieL728@aol.com](mailto:judieL728@aol.com)**

LWNYS board and staff are all busy planning for our 60<sup>th</sup> convention. You should have all received the Call to Convention and the registration kit as well as the awards packet. We thank the 16 leagues who held program planning meetings and submitted their responses, enabling the LWNYS board to determine which we will recommend. Soon you will be receiving the Pre Convention Kit, with the recommended as well as non-recommended studies, the slate of officers, the budget, all of which delegates will be voting on at convention. There will also be information on workshops, caucuses, speaker, and much more. We are working hard to make this a great convention, but the success of the

convention will depend on YOU! Yes, it is YOU who will be selecting and sending delegates to represent your leagues. We thank the Leagues and delegates who have already registered. We are hoping that each league can and will send the amount of delegates they are allowed and if there is any problem in doing so will let us know. We also are hoping each League will submit applications for the awards. This is a chance for you to brag and write about what you have done. It is also a chance to win an award and be acknowledged at the Awards Ceremony on Saturday night. We have not yet received any applications and know there is time!

We know you are all busy and we are too! There are the volunteers working on the LWVUS Transformation meetings. Thank you to the many who applied and congratulations to those who were accepted. We are so glad that we will have an input and impact on final plans. There is Vote 411 training on April 13. There is Lobby Day on May 2<sup>nd</sup>; please try to attend and encourage your members to learn about lobbying and have a firsthand experience. There is Students Inside Albany on May 21-24<sup>th</sup>. We are so looking forward to holding this exceptional program in person this year and meeting and engaging all your students.

Our mission, Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy is so crucial and important. We as leaders are trying to do so much at a time when we many struggling to maintain and grow our leagues. Our tasks are enormous but we have a growing amount of resources! The Presidents' Google Group has been a very useful tool used by many of you to ask and answer questions. This month a question concerning templates was asked and answered with a link to LWVUS website. There is so much information available to us, none of us can know it all, but together we usually can find an answer or where to look. To that end, we have also established the 5 regional groups. Each of the 5 groups has held their meetings, sharing ideas and successes. There will be a Presidents' Zoom Meeting April 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm, where highlights from regional meeting as well as the convention will be discussed. Please plan to attend!

## **State Office**

### **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 April 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! 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). We have started to make plans for the Convention and your local League should, too. The Registration Kit is available, has been emailed to all Presidents and is posted on the state website. Do you know who will represent your League – choose NOW and register!

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@lwvny.org](mailto:Milly@lwvny.org). Thanks!

**Issues and Advocacy, Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy, [sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com), and Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Deputy Director, [Erica@lwvny.org](mailto:Erica@lwvny.org)**

**Small Donor Public Financing: A Tool for Empowering New Yorkers in the Age of Citizens United**

On March 9th the State League, in collaboration with the Brennan Center and the Rockefeller Institute hosted a program on the new Public Campaign Finance Program. The 2024 election cycle, already underway, marks an historic first for New York State. It will be the first election where candidates running for the Senate and Assembly can opt into the state’s new small donor public financing program. The voluntary program offers a match of public money for small contributions from constituents to eligible participating candidates. The presentation explored how public financing fits into the post-Citizens United landscape and how the reform amplifies the voices of everyday New Yorkers in our elections and government. See links to the recorded program and the Powerpoint presentation on the state website at: <https://lwvny.org/our-work/public-campaign-finance-program/>

### **Action Alert on Public Financing of Campaigns!**

There has been a lot of pushback on the program from legislators so the State League has also asked members to call their legislators in support of the program. As part of our coalition (Fair Elex) work on this issue, there is a press conference and lobby visits on Thursday, March 30 – hope you can join us.

1. **PRESS CONFERENCE:** Fair Elex will be hosting a presser on the **Million Dollar Staircase in the Capitol Building at 10:15am this Thursday (3/30)**. We will be calling on the governor and legislature to fund the Public Campaign Finance Program in the budget and implement it without delay for the 2024 elections. You can RSVP here: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/public-campaign-finance-fund-it-now-press-conference-rsvp?source=direct> link. Please plan to arrive shortly before the 10:15am start time!
2. **LOBBY VISITS:** Following the presser, we will be visiting lawmakers' offices to advocate for the program. We will provide leave behind materials and talking points for anyone who wants to participate. **Please email me (millardh@brennan.law.nyu.edu) as soon as possible to let me know that you would like to participate** – we want to get a rough sense of numbers as we plan out the day.

We understand traveling to Albany might not be an option for everyone – that's ok! **For those who want to apply pressure from afar, we've created a final week of budget advocacy toolkit, which you can find here:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I7ODinpI8qXLiSmgFtMsrdfs5Ulf6IoHgJDug8dHgk8/edit?usp=share\\_link](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I7ODinpI8qXLiSmgFtMsrdfs5Ulf6IoHgJDug8dHgk8/edit?usp=share_link). We are asking partners to continue calling, emailing, and Tweeting their lawmakers to express support for the program.

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### **Clean Slate NY Coalition**

The state Board voted to join the Clean Slate NY Coalition at its meeting last week. The Clean Slate NY campaign is fighting for a law ([S211/A1029](#)) that will automatically clear a New Yorker's

conviction record once they become eligible. The passage of Clean Slate will boost economic growth, expand the state's workforce, and help businesses hire employees. Clean Slate NY is the leading advocacy organization on these efforts. Coalition members of Clean Slate NY include major labor unions, business leaders, chambers of commerce from across the state, local legislatures and dozens of advocacy groups. <https://www.cleanslateny.org/>

### **NYS Budget**

The proposed NYS Budget has been released by the Governor in early February, 30 day amendments were made by the Governor and each house has now released their own proposed budgets. Now, it's up to the three parties (Governor, Assembly Speaker and Senate Majority Leader) to negotiate a final budget which then must be passed by the two houses as well. The deadline is April 1 but rumors are that it will be a few days late. Below are links for the League's testimony and statements on these proposed budgets. See all the letters, testimony, and memos that we've submitted on the state website under Our Work and Legislation Action (<https://lwny.org/legislative-action/>).

### ***Executive Budget***

The Executive Budget was released on February 7, 2023. In response we submitted written testimony to the following hearings: Public Protection, Environmental Conservation, Health and Mental Hygiene, and Elementary and Secondary Education. On February 9<sup>th</sup> we testified orally at the Public Protection hearing. View the full testimonies on the state website (<https://lwny.org/legislative-action/>).

### ***Senate One House***

The League has reviewed and assessed the Senate one-house budget. We were pleased to see support for many of the issue areas on which we work. See the statement summarizing the decisions we support and those we oppose at <https://lwny.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2-One-House-Budget-Statement-2023-Senate.pdf>.

### ***Assembly One House***

The League has reviewed and assessed the Assembly one-house budget. We were pleased to see support for many of the issue areas on which we work. See the statement summarizing the decisions we support and those we oppose at <https://lwny.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2-One-House-Budget-Statement-2023-Assembly.pdf>.



### **International Women's Day**

March 8<sup>th</sup> was International Women's Day. The theme was "Embrace Equity" and we were proud to join the United Way of the Greater Capital Region and The Blake Annex to celebrate. We participated in an event and panel to discuss tackling biases and embracing equity in women's health. (see photo with Erica Smitka, 4<sup>th</sup> from left)

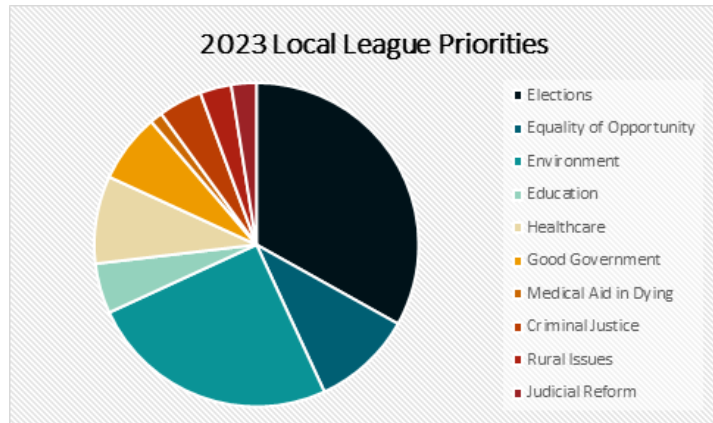


### **PowHer Equal Pay Day**

March 14<sup>th</sup> was Equal Pay Day and the State League co-sponsored an Equal Pay Day Rally with PowHer NY to raise awareness about the wage gap for women and women of color and to talk about the root cause of the issues that have caused this disparity. Due to a snow storm, this rally was moved to be a virtual rally.

### **Legislative Priority Survey**

The State League sent out the form for the 2023 legislative priorities in December of 2022. The forms were due February 1st, 2023. 28 Leagues submitted their top three legislative priorities. This is a total of nine more Leagues than submitted last year. All of the results were weighted based on how they were ranked (first, second, or third) by each League.



For our local Leagues' first priority, Election Law/Campaign Finance was the top choice receiving 53 votes. The second priority was the Environment with 40 votes. The third priority was Equality of Opportunity.

*The final totals for each priority are:*

- Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform: 53
- Environment: 40
- Equality of Opportunity: 16
- Healthcare: 14
- Good Government Reform: 11
- Education: 8
- Criminal Justice: 7
- Rural Issues: 5
- Judicial Reform: 4
- Medical Aid in Dying: 2

### **Voter Services, Nancy Rosenthal, VP for Voter Services,** **[nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com](mailto:nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com)**

#### **Vote 411**

Local Leagues are responsible for creating the Vote 411 races and candidate information for this year's elections. Since the elections are all local (no state or national), the state League does not enter anything in Vote 411. If you do not know how to access your Vote 411 page, contact [Milly@lwnvny.org](mailto:Milly@lwnvny.org) and she can get you the log in and passwords. Milly is also available to answer any questions or help as you develop your pages.

But, in addition, excitement is in the air as we anticipate the [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) training with Megan Brown, the LWVUS [vote411.org](http://vote411.org) guru! She will tell us the new ins and outs of [vote411.org](http://vote411.org), making it easier

for us to create our League's Voters' Guide for 2023. The massive overhaul in 2022 made [vote411.org](http://vote411.org) so much easier to use. For starters, the ballot page is now more user-friendly and functional. This training is for all of us, beginners and returners alike! After the training, we will be ready to set up the races, the candidates, and the questions for candidates for the June 27 primary! With Early Voting starting June 17th, start strategizing the steps necessary for your League's [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) to go LIVE. This training is for people new to Vote 411, but also a great refresher for those who have done Vote 411 before.

**Vote411 Training** April 13, 5:30 PM (date changed from previous announcement) [REGISTER HERE](#)

**The time is NOW to order Voter Guide Part 1.** We do not expect a Voters Guide Part 2 this year given as of now there are no ballot propositions or amendments. We will keep you informed. Voter Guide part I is being printed now and will be shipped out to local Leagues in the next couple of weeks. The order form is attached.

### **Plan to Vote Palm Cards**

Voters with a Plan to Vote are more likely to get to vote by absentee ballot or get to the polls during early voting or on election day. LWVUS has created Plan to Vote palm cards in English and Spanish. These palm cards can be used at voter registration and table events. These designs can be easily downloaded with printing guidance on the [League Management Site](#). You can usually take the document to a Staples or other printing vendor and get them printed – or your home printer works well, too!

### **Candidate Forums**

On another note near and dear to all of us doing Voter Service, we have heard the frustration of planning a candidates' forum, getting candidates to respond, or a candidate dropping out at the last minute. We know our nonpartisanship is what sets us apart from others and it is what has us as a trusted voice in our communities. Even though we have not found one yet, the Voter Service Committee continues to discuss options that will maintain our nonpartisanship so that the League continues to educate and inform the voting public about candidates running for office.

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

### **DEI Self-Assessment Surveys**

Many thanks to those who have completed or are near completion of the DEI Assessment Survey! Several have begun to come in to meet the deadline of April 1<sup>st</sup>, from both LWV individual members and from local Boards. It is a good sign that there are not many questions but please do not hesitate to ask should questions arise. Also, I have approved several local League Boards for an extension in their submission deadline. If your board needs an extension, please email me asap so I know who is looking to provide input into the question of LWVNYS policies, practices, and behaviors impacted by the principals of DEI.

**Note: Due to the delay in issuing the DEI Survey, the deadline for all members, as well as for Boards, is extended from April 1<sup>st</sup> ... to April 15th.** (Those that have consulted with me have their own specified deadline which we have agreed upon.) If anyone is missing the email blast containing the links to the PDF version (for review) and to Google Forms (for final survey submission) to the LWVNYS DEI Assessment Survey, here they are for your retrieval:

[PDF of DEI Survey](#)

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

Remember, there are no wrong answers! We only need your honest assessment and impressions to allow the formulation of next steps.

### **Next DEI Education Event via ZOOM – SAVE THE DATES!**



**What do NY kids learn about our racist history? *And what do you know?***

**April 17 and April 24, 7:00 pm to 8:30pm**

[Registration link](#)

There is serendipity in the world! Long story, but while some States fight against understanding the complete history of this country, some in NYS are making history in its entirety more accessible!

Case in point... Rochester Metro Area LWV awardees for “Making Democracy Work”, elementary school teachers, *Kesha James and Shane Wiegand*, are working on their Antiracist Curriculum Project. It entails lesson plans for K-12 teachers covering the history of slavery in New York as well as racist policies in the 20th century which have made residential segregation deeply entrenched. They also teach about the resistance to slavery and racism. Yes, fellow Leaguers ...slavery existed in the North! The lesson plans and other content are adapted to our adult audience and presented with teaching techniques. All members of the LWVNYS are invited as well as League friends and partners.

**Mondays, April 17th and April 24<sup>th</sup>**, join us in this two-part learning event brought to the LWVNYS and hosted by Pathstone. Co-sponsored by the Rochester Metro Area LWV.

**DEI Virtual Drop-In Meeting:** Occurred on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, and we give a heartfelt thank you to the featured a guest, Ms. Freddie Hamilton. She serves as the President of the Utica/Oneida County NAACP for the 2023-2025 term, is the Executive Director of Rebuilding the Village, Inc., a Community Based Organization serving at-risk children, youth and families in Cornhill and West Utica, and has been a Cultural Competency/ Racial Equity Consultant for 12 years. We very much enjoyed her input! **“SAVE THE DATE” for the next DEI Drop-In Session, scheduled for 7:00pm – 8:00pm, Wednesday, May 3rd!**

Questions about DEI in the League or our activities, please feel free to connect with Regina Tillman: [rmt370@gmail.com](mailto:rmt370@gmail.com).



## **2023 Students Inside Albany Conference: Laura Ladd Bierman, [Laura@lwvny.org](mailto: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 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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@lwvny.org](mailto:Laura@lwvny.org).

## **Local League Support Committee, Joy Rosenzweig, [joyrose6@gmail.com](mailto:joyrose6@gmail.com), and Kathy Stein, [kstein1@twcnv.rr.com](mailto:kstein1@twcnv.rr.com), Co-Chairs**

The LLSC will be presenting a workshop at the LWVNYS Convention entitled, "Membership: Everything, Everywhere All at Once." Join us as we explore ways Leagues have used voter service, advocacy work, and educational events to attract and engage members.

The Committee has launched our trial run of quarterly regional meetings. Local Leagues were grateful for the 5 regional meetings to share concerns and ideas. Specific ideas will be compiled and shared during the April 20<sup>th</sup> Presidents' call. Below is a brief recap.

*Capitol Region (Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, NYC, Mid-Hudson, Putnam)  
Pattie Garrett participant/facilitator*

Topics discussed included engaging members, energizing the board of directors, diversity in membership, volunteer fatigue, and advising nominating committee about required board talents/skills.

*Central Region (Cazenovia, Cooperstown, Oneonta, St. Lawrence MAL, Syracuse Metro Area, Utica/Rome Metro Area, North Country)  
Kathy Stein participant/facilitator*

Topics included facilitating better coordination between Leagues in the same legislative districts, recruiting/engaging members in areas other than voter registration, and specific issues leagues have worked on (reducing political polarization, climate change and environmental protection).

*Long Island (Central Nassau, East Nassau, Port Washington/Manhasset, Great Neck MAL, Brookhaven, Huntington, Smithtown, The Hamptons, Shelter Island and North Fork)  
Judie Gorenstein participant/facilitator*

Topics included increasing candidate participation in candidate nights, other ways to "brand" to educate voters, and ideas to maintain and grow leagues (bring a friend).

*Western Region and Southern Tier (Buffalo/Niagara, Chautauqua, Geneva, Rochester, Cattaraugus-Allegany MAL, Broome-Tioga, Cortland, Steuben-Chemung, Tompkins)  
Lori Robinson and Joy Rosenzweig participant/facilitators*

Topics included membership/engagement/leadership issues, collaboration, and league communication (get the right content to the interested members and cut email overload).

*Westchester County and Rockland (Rockland, Northeast Westchester, Larchmont-Mamaroneck, New Castle, Rivertowns, New Rochelle, Rye-Rye Brook-Port Chester, Scarsdale, White Plains)*  
*Jane Colvin facilitator*

Topics included how to increase membership and develop leaders. Some ideas were feature “hot topics,” follow up with event attendees, bring a friend, and remember that membership is everyone’s responsibility all year round.