

STATE VOTER

October 2023



President's Message

Nancy Rosenthal - nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com

Here we are in these last days before the General Election Tuesday November 7th. Let's all spread the word that every election is important, especially local elections given they directly affect our neighborhoods and our communities. Vote411.org is LIVE throughout the state. Vote411.org is an invaluable resource. On vote411.org, ask your fellow voters to [check your registration](#) to

make sure where one is registered to vote! Voters have until October 28th to register. Learn about early voting locations for October 28 through November 5th by visiting your local BOE (Board of Elections). Check out vote411.org and spread the word on this excellent resource for learning candidates' thoughts on questions developed by your local League. Lastly, plan on how you will get to the polls election day and share your plan with friends and neighbors and encourage them too to make a plan to vote. Making a plan is one of the best ways for us all to Get Out the Vote (GOTV). Let's all do what we can so that our voices are heard!

PS: Did you know VOTE411.org was named Best Government & Civil Innovation Website in the 24th Annual Webby People's Voice Awards?

Opinion Piece in the Washington Post

By Danielle Allen, October 19, 2023

In a recent opinion piece in the Washington Post, Danielle Allen asks how readers are working to renovate our democracy. And, one way mentioned in the article is the League of Women Voters. Read the full article [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Regional Training Workshop Dates and Locations Set

In years when there is no state Convention, the state League organizes training workshops in four locations around the state during the month of March. All members are invited to attend the workshops so mark your calendars now! They are held on Saturdays from 10:00-4:00 with lunch provided. The following dates and locations for workshops have been set. Watch for registration information shortly.

- March 2 Rochester
- March 9 Port Washington
- March 16 Cortland (switched dates with Albany)
- March 23 Albany (switched dates with Cortland)

Advocacy Events

- Jan 16, 2024 In-person Lobby Day (Albany) with Compassion and Choice to support Medical Aid in Dying
- Feb 3, 2024 Hot Topics - on Zoom (League Issue Specialists present League action for the upcoming legislative session)
- May 7, 2024 League Advocacy Day (speakers and materials with in-person lobbying in Albany)

Past Event

NYS 2023 Ballot Proposals Webinar

Last night over 140 people attended a brief webinar to discuss the 2023 ballot initiatives in New York State. We were joined by Patrick Woods from Albany Law Government Law Center and Laura Franz from NYSUT to talk about the sewage debt limit and the small city school debt limit respectively. A recording of the webinar can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/-xXgf-ugFT0>

Also, the Government Law Center at Albany Law School created two short explanations of the two ballot proposals. You can read the Small Cities Schools Debt Limit proposal [here](#) and the Sewer Debt Limit proposal [here](#).



League Electronic Voter Guide

When you are seeking voting information, you may either use the NYS Board of Elections website or Vote411.org, depending on what you are seeking.

Vote411 is a national voter guide developed by the

League of Women Voters national organization. Everyone can check their voter registration status from here; register to vote; obtain ballot and candidates' information; watch candidates forums, and more.

To see your ballot, simply click on the [Find What's on Your Ballot](#) and then enter your address. All of your candidates, proposals, and districts will be listed. Feel free to share this website information with your family and friends who reside anywhere in the U.S.



Voter Services

Kathy Meany, VP for Voter Services

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Local leagues have been busy throughout the state registering voters, running Candidate Forums, educating members and voters about deadlines, state ballot proposals, and promoting Vote411.org – all as part of Get Out the Vote messaging.

Online Voter Registration Now Available at the NYS Board of Elections Website

As of July 2023, NYS Board of Elections offers an Online Voter Registration Portal. Register to vote here or update your voter information. Updated information could include providing your County Board of Elections with your new name, new address, or changing your party enrollment. Completed applications are sent to the appropriate County Board of Elections for approval and processing.

This could be a two-step process for some as a NY.Gov ID is required to register. If you have previously used NY.Gov with another agency, you may use the same login to access the Online Voter Registration portal. If you have not used NY.Gov you will need to create an account.



Scan the QR code for direct access.

To get to the online voter registration portal on the NYS BOE website, click here:

<https://www.elections.ny.gov/OnlineVoterReg.html>

Same Day Voting - October 28

NYS Board of Elections has approved all those eligible to register to vote in New York

State may use an affidavit ballot AND vote on Saturday, October 28. Referred to as "Golden Day" being October 28 is the final voter registration deadline AND also the first day of Early Voting.

Important Dates to Remember

General Election: November 7, 2023

Early Voting: October 28 – November 5, 2023

October 28	Last day for IN-PERSON Voter Registration; MAIL IN registrations must be received by a Board of Elections.
November 6	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
November 7	Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local Board of Elections no later than Nov. 14th. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 20th.
November 7	Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local Board of Elections or to any poll site in your county.

Planning Ahead for 2024

- February 14, 2024: Change of Party Enrollment
- March 23, 2024: Last day of Voter Registration
- March 23-30, 2024: Early Voting for Presidential Primary (8 days due to Easter on March 31)
- April 2, 2024: Presidential Primary Election Day

See <https://www.elections.ny.gov/PoliticalCalendar.html> for the complete Presidential Primary Calendar.



Issues and Advocacy

Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy
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Bills Signed by Governor

The Governor still has over 300 bills on her desk that need to be signed. Out of our priority bills from last session the following still need to be signed:

- **Plain Language Ballot**

Initiative (S1381 Comrie/A1722 Zinerman) Requires proposed amendment to the constitution or other question provided by law to be submitted to a statewide vote be submitted to the people for their approval in plain language. **Not signed by Governor yet.**

- **Birds and Bees Protection Act (S01856 Hoylman-Sigal/A03226 Glick)** Enacts the birds and bees protection act; prohibits the sale of certain pesticides (neonics) or use of seeds coated with such pesticides; requires the department of environmental conservation to review the latest scientific information concerning certain pesticide active ingredients. **Not signed by Governor yet.**
- **Clean Slate (S211A Myrie/ A1029A Cruz)** Provides for automatic sealing of certain convictions after a certain passage of time from either imposition of sentence, release from parole or probation, and if the defendant does not have a current charge pending; excludes certain offenses; permits access by certain persons. **Not signed by Governor yet.**
- **School Based Health Centers (S2339 Rivera/A6029 Paulin)** Provides that services provided by school-based health centers shall not be provided to medical assistance recipients through managed care programs. **Not signed by Governor yet. It's worth it to note that the Governor has vetoed this bill in two previous legislative sessions.**

Legislation we opposed that passed is below:

- **Revisions to the New York State Public Campaign Finance Program (S7564/A7760)** were pushed through and passed. The League strongly opposes this bill. **Not signed by Governor yet.**

We expect the Governor to sign more bills post-election.

Bottle Bill and Packaging Reduction Hearings

This week the Senate and Assembly held public hearings on the Bottle Bill and the Packaging Reduction Act. We submitted written testimony for both and participated in a press conference on the Bottle Bill. See our written testimony for the Bottle Bill [here](#) and written testimony for Packaging Reduction [here](#).

Chapter Amendments

Do you have questions as to what are chapter amendments, how they work and more? Our friends at Reinvent Albany drafted a short explanation on Chapter Amendments. You can see it [here](#).



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Regina Tillman, VP for DEI

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We are in the final throws of aligning our LWVNYS DEI Committee members within Teams that categorize the work to be addressed (as referenced in September's Update):

- Education
- Communications
- Fundraising & Administrative
- Outreach & Support
- JEEDI (action) projects

Part of the objective this year is to redesign our committee to offer more assistance to membership while helping our League to grow in DEI knowledge, skills, appreciation, and most importantly, action. To do so, we are also taking steps to enhance 2-way communication between membership and this committee. *To aid in that objective, I have two requests to make of you that will represent membership's initial inputs into a new LWVNYS DEI webpage being developed:*

#1: Images: a very important way of conveying information and making impressions in today's world. I would ask that you all use your phone cameras more often for DEI related images for your own website gallery but to then send the best samples to us for posting and sharing to help us to demonstrate *your progress*. At this writing, there are very few pictures available that reflect your local efforts or strategies taken that resulted from your league's enhanced adoption of a ["DEI Lens"](#). With input from everyone, I would like to change that. And in doing so, all of us will also learn a bit more about how to avoid framing our work with tokens of the populations we endeavor to welcome into the League.

#2: Resources: while there are numerous excellent resources to tap into related to learning about, and improving an organization's practice of DEI principles, all difficult change begins within individuals. As such, the Resource Listing we are developing will have info that committee members personally felt held a certain key to unlock their understanding of what DEI meant, why it was needed, and how it could look being fully adopted within our organization. I would like to invite you to do the same! What literature, movie, art form, article, or speaker had an impact on you as we traveled along in our collective "DEI Journey" these past four years? Which of those would you recommend to your friends, neighbors and colleagues... and tell us why in no more than 3 lines! We would like to include meaningful sources of information as recommended by members in the Resource Listing, including your first name and town/city.

I hold the thought that the DEI Committee can be more interactive with membership this year, and I look to you, all as valued members of the LWVNYS, to meet us halfway through your submissions to our Committee in 2023-2024!

LWVUS Kicks Off the Program Planning Process

League Program is incredibly important. It is how we support our mission through education and advocacy. All League action, advocacy, and education are based on support for League positions and League principles. League action in support of League positions may be taken only in those areas where there is member understanding and agreement.

Now is the time of year to have input as to our LWVUS positions through the process called Program Planning. In case you missed the webinars on LWVUS Program Planning Process, here's more information and a recording:

<https://web.cvent.com/event/07627034-5f27-44a8-8363-5805fab4b0ef/websitePage:d731f100-0ba7-4f27-a187-304445077ba6>

See all of the **upcoming events** from LWVUS at [here](#).

Local League News

Albany County

The Albany County League recently partnered with the Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) to host a program on how the libraries in Albany County are funded. UHLS Director Tim Burke and UHLS Adult and Outreach Services Manager Judith Wines discussed the library system, how the 19 libraries in Albany County have widely divergent financial resources, and how to possibly increase library resources. The hosts also answered questions submitted by the public.

Westchester County

In honor of International Day of the Girl, the Westchester County League participated in *Strive to Thrive: Unlocking Your True Potential at Manhattanville College*. Hosted by the Westchester County Youth Bureau, Strive to Thrive invited high school girls throughout Westchester County to come together to be empowered in celebration of International Day of the Girl. The event will feature educational workshops, guest speakers, and performances. The Westchester County League hosted a table and delivered a Vote 18 workshop.

Rochester Metro Area

Along with their usual GOTV efforts, the Rochester Metro Area League has placed additional effort into tabling at grassroots community events in neighborhoods with historically low voter turnout. League volunteers have registered voters at community uplift events organized by Maplewood Neighborhood Association and Charlotte Neighborhood Association, the Front Porch Festival at Jordan Health Center, and at the Greater Harvest Church Pray and Play Events. Even though the number of attendees at the events is sometimes smaller than at the bigger festivals, the number of registrations has been comparable. As of September 20, the team has registered 41 new voters at these events and have reported having good conversations about the importance of voting in the local races this year.

Tompkins County

The Tompkins County League hosted a community-centered event that highlighted the importance of voting amongst all community members, with particular emphasis on the incarcerated and recently incarcerated. The event was co-sponsored by Your Voice + Your Vote, a coalition focused on civic education. The League was joined by speakers Dr. Kenneth Clarke (Director, Ithaca Office of Human Rights), Mar'Quon Frederick (undergraduate student organizer), Willie Owens (who shared a re-entry success story), and SingTrece (performer). Attendees enjoyed an evening of civic engagement, music, and food! League volunteers also registered people to vote.

St. Lawrence County

St. Lawrence County League president Kathleen Stein was a recent guest on North Country Matters to discuss the 2023 election! North Country Matters host Donna Seymour and Kathleen Stein discussed what voters can expect on their 2023 ballot, the changes to New York State election law that will affect voters, and the two state-wide

ballot amendments. [Click HERE to watch the full episode.](#)

Cooperstown and Oneonta

The Oneonta Daily Star recently covered the Cooperstown and Oneonta Leagues' work at Hartwick College! *In Our Opinion*: Protecting the right to vote is more important than ever calls out the Leagues as dedicated to supporting the democratic process, especially in their work in engaging younger voters.

The Leagues recently worked with Hartwick to launch its new Institute for Public Service the same week as National Voter Registration Day. The program is looking to sign up 300 voters in the next month, which could result in the possible addition of a polling place on the Hartwick campus. The institute has also been sponsoring debates for local elections to bring local governments to campus which could in turn spark interest among students, many of whom will be eligible to vote in their first presidential election next year.

Northeast Westchester and New York City

During the past year, Northeast Westchester League member Allison Chernow applied for and received a grant to help register formerly incarcerated people to vote. The project then grew into something bigger, and the Northeast Westchester League partnered with the New York City League, Rehabilitation Through the Arts, and Hudson Link & Exodus Transitional Community to hold "The Freedom to Vote."

Along with being a voter registration drive, the event featured a panel discussion with social justice advocates and Assemblymember Eddie Gibbs, the first formerly incarcerated person to serve in the NYS legislature, as the Keynote Speaker. Every speaker and almost every audience member was formerly incarcerated, and the messaging about voting and empowerment was directed to them. Audience members were completely engaged, asked the speakers great questions, and registered to vote afterwards!

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[Donate to LWNYS Education Foundation](#)

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