

PRE-BUDGET LEGISLATIVE PACKET 2024

TO: Local League Presidents/Action Chairs
FROM: Sally Robinson, VP Issues and Advocacy, sally.s.robinson@gmail.com
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Erica Smitka, Deputy Director, erica@lwvny.org

This year we are again providing members with key information on issues of interest to us in the 2024-2025 state budget and asking you to lobby your legislators on these issues. Enclosed please find the annual pre-budget legislative packet to assist with your lobby visits with your state Senators and Assembly Members. Pre-budget legislative lobbying in legislators' district offices should be **scheduled between February 20th and March 22nd**. This year our legislative packet covers funding for county boards of elections, election reforms, funding for the public campaign finance board, an expansion of the bottle bill, education financing and fair pay for home care.

Though we are continuing to work on our other priority issues related to good government, criminal justice reform, rural issues, 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 channels and email. Members should always feel free to mention any advocacy issue in the League's 2024 Legislative Agenda during their advocacy visits, but we do ask that you focus your conversations on the issues included in this packet. You may bring copies of the state League's Legislative Agenda to leave with the legislator or staff to inform them of all the issues on which the League is currently active or you can also leave a copy of our budget testimony, which you can find [here](#). We expect that our legislative priorities not directly impacted by the budget will be the primary focus of our post-budget lobbying.

2024 BUDGET REQUESTS

ELECTIONS AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

Our Asks:

Funding currently in the budget that we want to see kept in the budget:

- \$114.5M to support the NYS Public Campaign Finance Program
- \$8.1M to support the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government.

Additional funds we would like to see added:

- \$10M in funds directed to County Boards of Elections
- \$4.5M to implement the Doctor John L. Flatau Voting and Elections Database and Academic Center of New York Act
- \$51,000 for a voter list maintenance organization like ERIC

ENVIRONMENT

Our Ask:

We ask that Legislators include the Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237/A6353) in their one house budgets as well as in the final budget.

EDUCATION FINANCING

Our Ask:

We strongly oppose Governor Hochul's recent decision to alter the formula that is used to distribute aid to school districts. The changes made in her proposed budget will significantly reduce foundation aid to nearly half of all school districts in the state. The Executive altered both the Consumer Price Index methodology and the policy of reducing aid to no district year to year. As a result, nearly half of school districts will be forced to reduce their 2024-25 school budgets or raise local taxes. They will have no time for planning if the budget is not finalized until the end of March 2024. We are asking that the Governor amend her proposal and reinstate full funding to our schools and that the Senate and Assembly do not include this change in their one house budgets.

HEALTHCARE

Our Ask:

We ask that Legislators reject Governor Hochul's proposal to cut \$2.55 an hour from home care workers in the consumer directed personal assistance program (CDPAP) and pass the Fair Pay for Home Care Act (S3189/A8821) in the budget.

ELECTIONS AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

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Ethics and Campaign Finance Reform

Public Campaign Finance Board

The League strongly supports the \$114.5M allocated for the Public Campaign Finance Board. This year is the first opportunity for New York to demonstrate a commitment to campaign finance reform and reducing the influence of big money in politics. During the 2022 election, the 200 biggest donors outspent over 200,000 small donors in state races. This groundbreaking state program will ensure that New Yorkers' voices are heard throughout the political process. The funding for this program included in the Executive Budget will ensure that it can help level the playing field, amplify the voices of small donors, and reduce the impact of wealthy special interest groups in New York. *We urge the Legislature to include the full \$114.5M in the Senate and Assembly one house budgets.*

Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government

We were glad to see the continued funding of New York's new ethics body, the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government. *We urge the Legislature to maintain the \$8.1 M in funding in their budget as continued support for a commission that holds public officials accountable.*

Funding to County Boards of Election

Elections are often the last item on the list when it comes to county budgets and many county boards operate with limited resources. The League urges the Legislature to seriously consider the cost of new election improvements when introducing their proposed budgets and to consider setting up a yearly fund specifically for implementing election reforms at the local level.

The League was glad to see that funds were specifically allocated for local boards of elections to invest in new electronic pollbooks (\$14.7 M), to cover the cost of absentee and early vote by mail ballot postage (\$7.7M). However, there are still limited funds available for educating voters,

poll worker training, staffing, and the establishment of new sites to comply with current mandates. It is not possible for boards to continue to expand voting access without funds devoted to these measures. We ask that a minimum of an additional \$10M in funding be allocated to county boards of elections so that they may make the upgrades necessary and hire the staff necessary to effectively run our elections in 2024. This is consistent with the bipartisan proposal submitted by election commissioners across New York State.

The 2024 Election Landscape

- Since the 2020 election we have seen misinformation, disinformation, and denialism around our election process soar while trust in our electoral process has declined.
- A study done in 2022, found that only 20 percent of voters are very confident in our electoral process.
- In August and September of 2023, individuals, falsely claiming to be representatives from the boards of elections, were going door to door claiming that voters were illegally registered to vote.
- Leagues across New York State have also reported an increase in pressure on local boards of elections to respond to numerous public access requests from voters and organizations who believe the elections process is flawed. Local boards of elections simply cannot keep up with the demand and requests like these ultimately disrupt their ability to prepare for and execute our elections.
- Attacks and stress on election workers has led to higher than typical turnover, making it difficult for local boards of elections to sustain enough staff to effectively run our elections and in turn to recruit poll workers. (see Brennan Center report for more details)

Our election system is the foundation of our democracy. A successful election is one in which voters elect a government that is representative and accountable to its citizens. Fiscal support to ensure our elections run smoothly and efficiently should be a high priority for New Yorkers across the state in 2024.

Why do we need to expand funding for county boards of elections?

- Ensuring adequate funding for local boards of elections in New York State ahead of the 2024 election is of paramount importance for safeguarding the democratic process and upholding the integrity of the electoral system.
- Local boards are on the front lines of organizing and conducting elections, managing voter registration, and addressing any logistical challenges that may arise. Adequate funding is essential to implement advanced technologies, update voting infrastructure,

and enhance cybersecurity measures, thereby fortifying the electoral system against potential threats.

- Local boards need more funding to hire and train qualified staff, improving the efficiency of voter outreach and education initiatives.
- With the increased risk of misinformation campaigns and cyber threats, robust funding is crucial for implementing comprehensive strategies to combat disinformation and ensure the accuracy and fairness of election processes. Investing in local boards of elections not only strengthens the democratic foundation of New York State but also reinforces public confidence in the electoral system, fostering a more transparent and secure democratic experience for all voters.
- Transparency in the electoral process has consistently been proven to be an effective tool to combat election denialism.

Dr. John L. Flateau Voting and Elections Database and Academic Center of New York Act (VEDAC)

The passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York (NYVRA) was a historic moment in New York. It established rights of action for denying or abridging the rights of any member as a protected class to vote, assisted language-minority groups, required certain subdivisions to receive preclearance for potential violations of the law, and created civil liability for voter intimidation. The League urges the legislature to include the companion database bill ([S657/A885A](#)) as a part of their budget proposal. This bipartisan legislation will create the Doctor John L. Flateau Voting and Elections Database and Academic Center of New York Act (VEDAC) (S657A/A885A); a central, public repository for election and demographic data, which will be accessible to all New Yorkers. VEDAC will be a central, public repository for election and demographic data, which will be administered and maintained by the State Board of Elections (“SBOE”), in partnership with our public university systems, and accessible to all New Yorkers. VEDAC will foster unprecedented transparency in New York’s elections and facilitate evidence-based election administration across the state. VEDAC will serve as a critical complement to the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York (“NYVRA”), by enabling policymakers, election administrators, voters, community groups, scholars, civil rights advocates, and others to access the data and analyses they need to identify practices that undermine our democracy and to develop ways to improve equitable access to the right to vote.

It is often difficult to access even the most basic information required to analyze whether and to what extent New Yorkers are equally able to cast a meaningful ballot. This vital information includes election results, voter files, shapefiles of local redistricting maps, locations of polling

places, and other key data from election authorities, as well as precinct-level Census and American Community Survey data. This data belongs to the public—yet, at present, acquiring it requires approaching each jurisdiction of interest with FOIL requests in an inefficient and impractical fashion that hinders our efforts to protect New York voters.

The lack of access to these critical types of data impedes transparency, accountability, and meaningful voting rights enforcement. VEDAC will remedy this problem by providing easy access to data that can shed light on whether jurisdictions are providing equitable access to the political process. In concert with the NYVRA’s landmark measures, the VEDAC will empower New York voters to identify and resolve barriers to the franchise—and make it possible for election administrators and local officials to understand and address such issues proactively.

The League encourages each chamber of the New York State Legislature to allocate \$4.5 million—\$2.5 million to the SBOE and \$2 million to be allocated between the State University of New York and the City University of New York—to fully fund A885A/S657A. We encourage the Governor and the Legislature to enact S.657/A885A and to provide the funding required to build and maintain VEDAC, which make efforts to protect voting rights across our state more efficient and effective.

Election Registration Information Center- Funding participation in a multistate voter list maintenance organization

A critical method for combatting mis and disinformation across the state and to take some of the stress off local boards of elections would be to participate in a multistate voter list maintenance organization. The League supports the implementation of a bill (S6173B/A7052) to allow New York to join a multistate organization such as the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC). New York State currently has a centralized state voter database, but it does not track voters as they move out of state, and it has been very difficult to keep up to date.

What is ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center)?

- The Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization created by and comprised of state election officials from around the United States
- ERIC is the most effective tool available to help election officials maintain more accurate voter rolls.
- ERIC also helps states reach out to potentially eligible but not yet registered individuals with information on how best to register to vote.

A database such as ERIC would improve the accuracy of New York’s voter rolls, increase access to voter registration, reduce election costs, and would increase efficiency. *There is an initial buy-in cost of \$25,000 and an annual fee of around \$26,000 that we propose the Senate and Assembly include in their budgets.*

Additional Resources:

- Our budget [testimony](#) in Local/General Government
- [“Most Say U.S. Capitol Rioters Posed a Threat to Democracy | Ipsos.”](#)
- [“Local Election Officials Survey \(March 2022\).”](#) Brennan Center for Justice
- [“Administration Landscape Today’s Election.”](#) Elections and Voting Information Center,
- [“Communicating with Voters to Build Trust in the U.S. Election System.”](#) MIT Election Lab
- [“New York’s Top 200 Political Donors Outweigh Bottom 206,000.”](#) *Governing*, Times Union
- <https://ericstates.org/>

ENVIRONMENT

Our Ask:

- Include the Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237/A6353) in the Senate and Assembly one house budgets as well as in the final budget.

The Bigger Better Bottle Bill

The Recycling Crisis

- In New York State, on average, each person generates more than 4.5 pounds of trash daily.
- New York handles its trash by incineration at one of 25 – 30 active landfills that accept roughly 6 million tons of waste per year from across the state.
- NYS already experiences a variety of climate hazards and chronic conditions due to the presence of escalating decomposed plastic waste and therefore requires focus and action on improved waste management.

Expanding the New York State Bottle Bill

New York's long-standing Bottle Bill has been effective. It was introduced at a time when New York's landfills were rapidly approaching capacity. Once in effect, the Bottle Bill proved to help reduce litter across the state. In 2022, New York showed a redemption rate of 69.9%. This redemption rate, while laudable, nevertheless fails to keep pace with the escalating production of single use beverage packaging. In short, since 1983 New York's overall waste crisis has expanded while, as mentioned below, the underfunded redemption centers are closing across the state at record rates.

Since 2008, one-half of the bottle and can (hereinafter collectively referred to as "bottle") redemption centers throughout New York State have shut down. Since the original Bottle Bill was introduced in 1983, the last time major amendments were added to this law was in 2009. Currently, for each bottle a consumer redeems, the consumer receives 5¢ back, and the authorized redemption center forwards that money to the consumer, before later getting reimbursed by the distributing company 3.5¢ per item redeemed. This low rate of return for consumers discourages public participation in the redemption process. Further, the redemption centers are expected to function on 2009 income in 2023 resulting in small to non-existent profits. As a result, redemption centers are shutting down at a rapid pace; during the period of 2022-2023, one hundred redemption centers shut down. This failure to modernize the bottle recycling process has resulted in reduced accessibility to many New Yorkers, loss of jobs, an

escalating recycling crisis, and a corresponding rise in pollution that adversely impacts the climate, the environment, and human health.

What would the bill do?

- Increase the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents. It's been a nickel since 1982!
- Increase the handling fee to 6 cents, which will support redemption centers.
- Expand the types of bottles that can be redeemed for deposit to include wine, liquor, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages (ex. juice). The expanded bill would not include dairy products.

What are the benefits of expanding the bill?

- It has been demonstrated that raising the bottle deposit from 5¢ to 10¢ can fund the bottle redemption infrastructure and provide long-term security to the redemption centers, while likewise creating a greater consumer incentive to recycle.
- Expanding the types of beverages to be accepted at redemption centers will capture more single use containers.
- States with higher deposits have higher redemption rates. In states that have instituted a 10¢ deposit, the redemption rates observed in 2022 float around 76%-86%. (ex. Oregon)
- It is estimated that fully modernizing the Bottle Bill in New York State will result in a recycling rate of beverage containers moving from 69% to 92%.
- In addition, modernization of the Bottle Bill is estimated to result in a reduction of greenhouse gasses by 550,000 metric tons yearly.
- Increased deposits generate more revenues for the state. Inclusion of an expanded bottle bill could produce \$171M-349M in revenue for New York State.
- Other states have successfully added wine, liquor, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages to their laws including Vermont, Maine, Iowa, and Oregon
- Additional funds can be used to increase redemption options in low-income communities (often “food deserts”) and address other litter and solid waste problems.

Modernizing New York’s Bottle Bill reflects a common sense, achievable step to incentivize consumers to recycle beverage containers, update and restore a functional system within redemption centers, and create a greater potential to reduce pollution, preserve the environment, and achieve a more sustainable quality of life for our citizens.

Additional Resources:

- Our budget [testimony](#) in the Environmental Conservation hearing

- [Report on Waste Reduction](#), NY State Assembly
- [Types of Solid Waste in NYS.](#), Department of Environmental Conservation
- [Bottle Bill Resource Guide](#)
- [Lawmakers Probe Bottle Bill as Redemption Centers Threaten to Close](#), Spectrum News
- [Redemption Rates in Most U.S. Bottle States](#), Container Recycling Institute
- [ReLoop Report on Bottle Bill](#)
- [ReLoop Report on Bottle Bill- Press Release](#)

EDUCATION FINANCING

Our Ask:

- We strongly oppose Governor Hochul's recent decision to alter the formula that is used to distribute aid to school districts. The changes made in her proposed budget will significantly reduce foundation aid to nearly half of all school districts in the state. The Executive altered both the Consumer Price Index methodology and the policy of not reducing aid to any district year to year. As a result, nearly half of school districts will be forced to reduce their 2024-25 school budgets or raise local taxes. They will have no time for planning if the budget is not finalized until the end of March 2024. *We implore the Governor to amend her proposal and reinstate full funding to our schools and that the Senate and Assembly do not include this change in their one house budgets.*

Foundation Aid Formula

The executive budget has proposed to stop using the current Consumer Price Index (CPI), this year it is 3.8 percent, and instead begin using a 10-year rolling average of 2.4 percent. This change will underfund the Foundation Aid formula, which is the main driver of both school aid in our state and the distribution of equitable state aid funding. Coupled with the blunt cuts being proposed by changes to the Save Harmless provisions that will affect 337 school districts around the state — half of which are high needs — this will lead to a compounding loss of programs and services such as mental health, enrichments, and staff to assist students for years to come.

As proposed, these changes will result in a decrease of \$419 million in Foundation Aid. They will strip our schools of the resources required to provide students with the quality education they deserve. This decision not only breaks a promise made to our children and educators but also jeopardizes the future of our communities by undermining the foundation of a strong and equitable education system.

The impact of this shortfall will be felt across all districts, disproportionately affecting those already struggling. Without the promised funding, schools will be forced to make cuts that could result in larger class sizes, fewer and diminished educational programs, and a decline in the quality of education our children receive. This is not just a budgetary issue; it is a question of our priorities and values as a state.

Inflation Adjustment's Effect on Foundation Aid:

- The Executive Budget has extended the range of years for the Consumer Price Index calculation, thus reducing aid by over \$400 million via the Foundation Aid formula's operation.
- This puts the final installment of Foundation Aid (over \$1B) at risk of being distributed.
- We support the use of cost adjustments for inflation that realistically reflect changes in cost year to year. A ten-year (even with removing high and low figures) retrospective does not allow school districts to keep up with cost increases that have occurred more recently during the past decade. This methodology should be rejected.

Hold Harmless Feature of the Formula:

- The League's 2006 study (see additional resources below) largely focused on how schools should be financed. In short, the League found that progressive taxation should be used (a blend of the taxes our State now uses), and that the method of distribution of school funding should favor the highest need districts.
- Holding districts harmless means the policy of reducing aid due to population declines. This provision adds cost to the State, and often skews aid away from the neediest districts.
- Our study results indicated that a move toward district consolidation was needed. Unfortunately, due to local resistance and a plethora of excuses, the State has not done a very good job in this regard.
- The State Education Department now remains saddled with the administrative responsibility not only for nearly 700 districts but also hundreds of charter schools.
- The League favors consolidation and efficiencies in the operation of our state's schools and encourages the Legislature to work with the State Education Department, implementing Regents' recommendations which are badly needed to modernize the system.

Why raising taxes won't be an effective solution:

- School districts' ability to raise taxes is limited by the property tax cap.
- Local school district financial reserves, where they exist, were built largely through federal funds which will expire in September 2024.
- Reserves, necessary for capital emergencies, among other things, are difficult to replenish if they are required to be used to fill operating budget gaps that were not anticipated.

- The Governor’s argument that “schools have reserve funds” is a generalization that does not universally apply to school districts, especially less wealthy ones, and rural ones, who are receiving cuts under the published “school aid runs.”

Additional Resources:

- 2006 League [study](#) on education financing
- Our budget [testimony](#) in the Education hearing

HEALTHCARE

Our Ask: We ask that Legislators reject Governor Hochul's proposal to cut \$2.55 an hour from home care workers in the consumer directed personal assistance program (CDPAP) and pass the Fair Pay for Home Care Act (S3189/A8821) in the budget.

Fair Pay for Homecare (S3189/A8821)

New York is facing the worst home care shortage in the nation because of low wages. In her Executive Budget the Governor proposes eliminating wage parity in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, which supports almost half of all home care workers in NYS. The Governor's proposal would cut \$2.55 an hour from home care workers in the CDPAP program. Eliminating funding for CDPAP staff (many of whom work in the most expensive parts of NYS) will reduce supply, not increase it. Instead of divesting away from paying home care workers directly, we ask that Legislators include the Fair Pay for Home Care Act (S3189/A8821) in the budget. This act would increase home care worker wages to 150% of minimum wage and finally make home care a living wage job.

Why do we need Fair Pay for Homecare?

- New York's population is aging rapidly. Over 4.6 million New Yorkers will be over 65 by 2035
- One million New Yorkers will require home care by 2035
- 42% of home care agencies report high turnover and 20% of home care positions are unfilled. Home care workers (91% of which are women and 77% are people of color) are leaving the job in search of higher wages.

What are the benefits of Fair Pay for Homecare?

The NY Caring Majority Campaign has highlighted the benefits of Fair Pay for Home Care below. Fair Pay for Home Care would:

- End the home care worker shortage: Fair Pay for Home Care would wipe out the home care workforce shortage in less than five years.
- Keep people safe: Fair Pay for Home Care would keep older adults and disabled people out of nursing homes and emergency rooms.
- Strengthen our economy: The state would generate \$6.4 billion through job creation and moving home care workers off social assistance — putting FP4HC on track to be one of the most successful economic development programs in the state's history.

- Lift workers out of poverty: Fair Pay for Home Care would lift over 200,000 home care workers out of poverty.

Additional Resources:

- Our budget [testimony](#) in the Healthcare hearing
- NY Caring Majority's budget [testimony](#) in the Healthcare hearing
- [+50 Workers, Consumers, & Legislators Demand State Stop Multibillion Dollar Giveaway to Private Insurers 1199SEIU](#)
- [NY Caring Majority Budget Testimony](#)

Final Thoughts

Although we have presented you with several options for discussion with your legislator, you do not need to cover all included topics. This exchange of information benefits the state League in its efforts to develop strategies that promote our advocacy at the Capitol. Our influence in Albany depends on your contact with your state Senator and Assembly person(s). They know you elect them! If you haven't done so already, set up an appointment to see your state Assembly person(s) and Senator virtually. Meeting with a staff person in your elected's office is fine.

This Packet is available on the state League website under Our Work, www.lwvny.org. Please return the attached form to the League office following your meeting by email to erica@lwvny.org. Alternatively, you may fill out a Post-Lobby Report form online via [this link](#). You should feel free to rely on the main points in this document for your visit, but more background information is available online on our website for your reference. See testimony, letters and memos submitted by the League during the legislative hearings on the executive budget at <https://lwvny.org/legislative-action/>. For any questions or concerns, please contact Erica at erica@lwvny.org

Tips for Lobbying While Remote

PREPARATION

1. **Making the appointment:** Like in-person meetings, the best method to schedule an appointment is to contact the legislator's district office and request an appointment with the scheduler. Many staff are now working remotely, so it is more likely you will have to schedule the meeting via email. In your email request include possible meetings dates and the names of the members attending. Be sure to mention which members are constituents of the Legislator and a general description of what you plan to discuss.

Some legislators prefer conference calls while others may make use of Zoom, Webex, or Google Meets. No matter the preferred meeting method, notify the scheduler of the number of participants in your group as well as their names, if possible. Send an e-mail confirming the appointment, mentioning the issues you will discuss. **If you cannot meet with the legislator, ask to meet with senior staff.**

Although meetings are remote, try to arrange for three to five League members to attend. If your League meets with several assembly members or senators, be sure to have a League member who is a constituent present. At least one person should be in the League. League members well versed on the issues to be lobbied should be included when possible. When more than one local League is involved, try to have representatives from as many of the constituent Leagues as possible.

2. **Assigning roles:** Even over Zoom or phone, each member of the lobby team should be assigned a specific role. The following are possible assignments:
 - Researching the legislator. Someone should be prepared to brief the other members of the lobby team on the legislator's relationship with the League and his/her voting record (if the legislator is a re-elected incumbent). What are his/her committee assignments and/or leadership positions in the Legislature? Is this legislator a member of the League?
 - Moderator/leader. This person should be certain that each League member introduces himself/herself. The leader must also watch the clock. Knowing ahead how much time the legislator has agreed to spend with you, the leader must allot an appropriate amount of time for each issue. It is the leader's responsibility to "pace" the visit and tactfully keep everyone (including the legislator) on the subject. **Remember, opinions expressed should be those of the League, not of individuals.**
 - Researching the issue or issues to be discussed. Look for the materials on this subject on the league website.

- Recording and reporting the legislator's response. The leader should not be the recorder.
3. **Follow Up:** In our remote world, follow up is more important than ever. Because members cannot physically leave behind documents related to the issues you discussed, a follow up email to the legislator and their staff will allow you to send a "thank you" along with documents related to the issues you discussed.

NOTE: If you anticipate printing any part of the interview in a League bulletin or newspaper, the recorder is obligated to get the legislator's permission and specific conditions under which you may print.

Tips for In-person Lobby Visits

PREPARATION

1. **Making the appointment:** Contact the legislator's district office. Ask for an hour's time, but accept less if necessary, and do not overstay your welcome. Notify the legislator of the number in your group as well as their names, if possible. Send a letter or e-mail confirming the appointment, mentioning the issues you will discuss. Note: if you cannot meet with the legislator, ask to meet with senior staff.

Try to arrange for three to five League members to attend. If your League meets with several assembly members or senators, be sure to have a League member who is a constituent present. At least one person should be experienced in League. League members well versed on the issues to be lobbied should be included when possible. A new member can be included in this exciting action if accompanied by experienced League members. When more than one local League is involved, try to have representatives from as many of the constituent Leagues as possible.

2. **Assigning roles:** Each member of the lobby team should be assigned a specific role. The following are possible assignments:
- Researching the legislator. Someone should be prepared to brief the other members of the lobby team on the legislator's relationship with the League and his/her voting record (if the legislator is a re-elected incumbent). What are his/her committee assignments and/or leadership positions in the Legislature? Is this legislator a member of the League? If this legislator sponsored bills that League supported, you may want to take a moment to express League's appreciation.

- Moderator/leader. This person should be certain that each League member introduces himself/herself. The leader must also watch the clock. Knowing ahead how much time the legislator has agreed to spend with you, the leader must allot an appropriate amount of time for each issue. It is the leader's responsibility to "pace" the visit and tactfully keep everyone (including the legislator) on the subject. **Remember, opinions expressed should be those of the League, not of individuals.**
- Involve the entire team. Choose someone familiar with or willing to review the general subject area of the question.
- Recording and reporting the legislator's response. The leader should not be the recorder.

Bring copies of the state League's Legislative Agenda to leave with the legislator or staff to inform them of all the issues on which the League is currently active.

NOTE: If you anticipate printing any part of the interview in a League bulletin or newspaper the recorder is obligated to get the legislator's permission and specific conditions under which you may print.

Complete and return the lobby report forms to the state League immediately following the visit. This information is critical to the development of effective League action plans.

Write a follow-up thank you after the visit. This is not only a gesture of politeness, but it also allows you to underscore some points made during the visit, answer any questions you were not sure about, or send a League publication to which you may have referred during the visit.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL LOBBYING

- Keep the meeting friendly and focused. If there is disagreement on a particular issue, make clear the League position but avoid argument. How the legislator arrived at a particular position is sometimes revealing; it provides an opportunity for explanation (for better or worse!) but it also can give the League a clue for future approaches on the subject.
- Keep the lines of communication open. There will be other issues, and other days, for finding agreement and support.

- If you do not know the answer to a legislator's question, please tell him/her that you will get the answer and provide him/her with the information as soon as possible.
- Give the legislator a copy of our brochure: ***2024 Legislative Agenda***.

If you have any questions about the visit, contact:

Erica Smitka, Deputy Director

E-mail: erica@lwvny.org

Lobby Check List

Before Your Visit:

- Do you know **what your “ask”** is?
- Did you send copies of the **Legislative Packet materials** to the legislator or staff ahead of the meeting?
- Are you ready to **refute opposition** arguments?
- Do you have a couple of **questions** you want to ask?
- Is there an **upcoming event** where you can invite the lawmaker? Or are you sending a student from their area to the **Students Inside Albany Conference**?

After Your Visit:

- Did you send the legislator and/or their staff a **Thank You** note?
- Did you send the legislator and/or their staff a copy of **Legislative Packet materials**?
- Did you send **follow up on any questions** they had?
- Did you send your **Lobby Response Form** to the State League office?
- Celebrate your success!**

Use this space for any additional notes:

2024 LWVNY'S LOBBY REPORT FORM : PRE-BUDGET LOBBY VISITS

Local League: _____ League Member Name: _____

Senator: _____ Assembly Member: _____

Bill or Topic _____

Bill Number (if applicable) _____

Other notes:

- 0- Talked about bill, but unsure of member's position
- 1- Opposes
- 2- Undecided/Has concerns or follow up questions
- 3- Supports
- 4- Will co-sponsor
- 5- Already co-sponsors and will champion publicly

Bill or Topic _____

Bill Number (if applicable) _____

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- 1- Opposes
- 2- Undecided/Has concerns or follow up questions
- 3- Supports
- 4- Will co-sponsor
- 5- Already co-sponsors and will champion publicly

Bill or Topic _____

Bill Number (if applicable) _____

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- *What were the legislator's biggest concerns?*

- *Where did you see eye to eye?*

- *Did they ask for additional information?*

Please return completed form to LWNYS, 1 Steuben Place, Albany, NY 12207,
or by email to Erica Smitka at erica@lwvny.org

Return the completed form by March 22, 2024