

## POST-BUDGET LEGISLATIVE PACKET 2024

TO: Local League Presidents/Action Chairs  
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Below are a number of standalone bills of interest based upon the feedback provided in the legislative priorities survey sent out to local Leagues in January. These are the post budget issues that are important to us in the 2024 legislative session and we ask you all to lobby your legislators on these issues. The annual post-budget legislative packet will assist with your lobby visits with your state Senators and Assembly Members. Additional educational materials on these issues can be found in the attached packet. Post-budget legislative lobbying in legislators' district offices or virtually should be **scheduled between early-May and early-June**.

Though they may not be in the packet, we are continuing to work on our other priority issues related to education, rural issues, and good government. Should these issues be advanced before the expected end of session on June 6<sup>th</sup>, we will issue action alerts to all members through our social media 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. Each section will include status of the legislation the League is advocating for and materials to assist in remote lobbying visits.

Given that this is a major election year, we will be focusing the majority of our efforts on moving election priorities forward. We will continue to work on other critical topic areas including environmental issues, equality of opportunity, criminal justice reform, rural issues, education, and more.

The issues included in this packet and online may be amended throughout the remainder of the legislative session. The League may also add additional legislative issues to this packet as needed.

This Packet is available on the state League homepage, [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org).

## **ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) ([S6173B Skoufis/A7052C Sillitti](#))**

ERIC is a multistate voter list maintenance organization. This bill is a critical method for combatting mis and disinformation across the state. It would also take some of the stress off local boards of elections. 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. **This legislation has passed the Senate and is in the Elections Committee in the Assembly.**

### *Talking Points:*

- 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.

### *Additional Resources:*

- [Let New York Vote memo of support for ERIC](#)
- [LNYV ERIC One Pager](#)
- [How does ERIC work?](#)

## **Democracy During Detention (S6875 Myrie/A9612 Walker)**

This bill would codify the right to vote and guarantee fair, timely access to voter registration and at least one secure method of balloting for all detained citizens who have not been disenfranchised. The Democracy During Detention Act improves election oversight, uniformity, quality control and intergovernmental cooperation to better protect eligible citizens' fundamental rights. **This legislation is in the elections committee in both the Senate and Assembly.**

### *Talking Points:*

- Many citizens detained in jails have the *right* to vote (e.g., those detained pretrial or convicted of misdemeanors), yet their *access* to the ballot is severely limited.

- A 2023 LWNYS survey of county sheriffs' offices revealed that one-third of New York counties either have *no* jail voter access program in place or could not provide details of such a program despite persistent inquiry.
- Without proactive coordination between elections and corrections officials to facilitate voter access, "many counties place the burden on detained individuals" to sort out eligibility and overcome registration barriers and mail delays. But unlike the general public, detained individuals face barriers that can prove insurmountable. Voter access can be hindered by limited access to stamps or internet-based resources like online registration, ballot request and tracking tools, and ballot-casting barriers like compromised privacy, jail-mail delays or limited language assistance.
- The disproportionate impact of voter suppressive policies on low-income voters and citizens of color that are too frequently seen outside of correctional facilities persist just as widely within correctional facilities. In 2021, 78% of New York's pretrial population was Black or Latinx.

#### How does the bill work?

- The bill improves access to voting for detained eligible citizens wherever they are held, while preserving flexibility for officials in populous and less populous areas to deploy a program tailored to their communities.
- Large corrections facilities in New York's most populous counties will be included automatically in the existing absentee ballot collection program that currently directs bipartisan teams of election officials to conduct in-person visits to large congregate facilities like nursing homes or hospitals, to distribute and collect voting materials.
- If enacted, local election boards serving at least 100,000 registered voters will coordinate a similar program with administrators of populous correctional facilities to provide both timely registration and voting, eliminating many barriers that can unjustly block legitimate political participation.
- Instead of the in-person absentee program, bipartisan county election officials may deploy a polling place at populous correctional facilities during the final weekend before election day, so eligible confined citizens and facility staff can conveniently vote. These programs will be governed by cooperation agreements that provide for orderly and secure registration, balloting, language assistance, and delivery and retrieval of voting materials.
- At minimum, all such eligible citizens must be provided with effective voter registration and absentee ballot access, regardless of where they are confined, no later than twenty-one days prior to election day. As with the general population, return postage for absentee ballots is prepaid. The State Board of Elections will also issue non-partisan voter education materials for mandatory distribution throughout corrections facilities.

#### *Additional Resources:*

- [Let New York Vote Memo of Support](#)
- [Voting in Jails League Study](#)

## **Better Notification of Purge from Voter Rolls ([S6168/A6764](#))**

The bill would ensure that boards of elections use all addresses and communication methods in the voter's registration record to notify the voter of cancellation or inactive status, including email address and phone number when an email address or phone number is in the voter's registration record. **This legislation is in committee in the Senate and has not been introduced in the Assembly.**

### *Talking Points:*

- Many voters arrive at the polls only to find that, without their knowledge, their voter registration was canceled or placed in inactive status. This may occur even though there was no change in the voter's residence or qualification to vote.
- This bill would ensure that each voter is notified of the reason that the voter's registration has been canceled or placed in inactive status, and that boards of elections use uniform, statewide forms of notice approved by the state board of elections for notification purposes.
- Prior to the 2016 election, the New York City Board of Elections illegally purged 200,000 voters from the poll books in Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan. The NYC Board of Elections subsequently settled a lawsuit over the purge by admitting that it broke federal and state election laws.
- If passed this bill would be effective immediately, making it an impactful piece of legislation to pass prior to the 2024 election.

### *Additional Resources:*

- [Let New York Vote One Pager](#)

## **Student Voter Empowerment Act (TBD)**

### **Key provisions in the Student Voter Empowerment Act include:**

- Require Student Voting Coordinators at all institutions of higher education to develop and implement robust two-year student voter action plans with at least three civic events a year
- Provide students with regular nonpartisan election-related information via different mediums (in-person high traffic areas, email, text, social media, website)
- Work with local boards of elections to standardize student voter registration such as the provision of pre-filled voter registration, the process to search for a voter's registration status, and the provision of information pertaining to the deadline to register to vote
- Create university voter committees with students and support student groups doing voter engagement
- Outline required election-related information to be sent to students such as, the process to search for a voter's early voting and election day assigned poll sites and the process and deadlines for applying for and returning absentee ballots, early mail ballot, and for curing defects in absentee ballots

- Allow excusal policies for students to vote
- Enroll all applicable schools in Tuft's National Study for Learning, Voting and Engagement

This bill has not yet been introduced but will be introduced this session, but we expect Senator Webb's office to introduce it in the Senate. It's important that we build support for the bill this session so that we can work to get it passed next session.

#### *Talking Points:*

Empowering the next generation of voters makes our communities stronger, strengthens civic education in our schools, and is an investment in the leaders of tomorrow.

- Young people are a force to be reckoned with at the voting booth. 18 to 29-year-olds make up approximately 21% of the eligible voting population nationwide and in New York State. Across the country, over 40.8 million members of GenZ (ages 18-27 in 2024) will be eligible to vote and nearly half (45%) of GenZ voters are people of color.
- But New York's youth turnout rate is lagging behind the rest of the country. During the 2022 midterm elections, 23% of youth (ages 18-29) turned out to vote across the country, making it the second-highest youth turnout in over three decades. While New York's youth turnout rate has improved in recent elections, it still falls behind the national average with only 20.7% of youth turning out to vote in 2022.

Our State's educational institutions and local boards of election can play a key role in closing the voter registration and turnout gap of young voters as trusted messengers of civic information.

- According to the National Study for Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE), there was a notable gap in the turnout rate of student voters and the rate of eligible student voters who registered to vote in the 2020 presidential election. Even if a young person is registered to vote, one of the most common reasons young people cite for *not voting* in an election is the lack of civic information about election processes and who is running for office.
- According to a national survey conducted by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), 1 in 5 youth who did not vote in 2022 said they did not have enough information about the voting process or candidates on the ballot. According to the same survey, young people were more trusting of educational institutions than major political parties and major news media outlets this election cycle.

#### *Additional Resources:*

- [Student Voter Empowerment Act Two Pager](#)
- [Student Voter Empowerment Act FAQ Sheet](#)

## **Bigger Better Bottle Bill ([S237B](#) May/[A6353A](#) Glick)**

This bill would expand the Bottle Bill passed in the 80s to include wine, spirits, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages. It would also increase the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents and use revenues to support recycling equity. **This legislation is in the Senate and Assembly Environmental Conservation Committees.**

### *Talking Points:*

- Expands the Existing Bottle Bill
  - Put deposits on wine, liquor, hard cider, and most non-carbonated beverages
  - A deposit system can dramatically reduce litter and solid waste that would otherwise be discarded
  - Other states have already added these types of containers to their laws, including Vermont, Maine, Iowa, and Oregon
- Increases the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents. It's been a nickel since 1982!
  - States with higher deposits have higher redemption rates
  - Increased deposits generate more revenues for the state
  - Additional funds can be used to increase redemption options in low-income communities (often "food deserts") and address other litter and solid waste problems
  - Use additional revenues to boost enforcement and to expand redemption centers into "food deserts" that limit consumers' ability to redeem their deposits.
  - The handling fee is increased to 6 cents, which will support redemption centers
- A recent report from the non-profit group ReLoop estimates \$171M-350M in additional revenue for NY state by modernizing the bottle bill. That study [here](#) (see page 34 - other great stats in that report as well)
- This bill will give a much-deserved raise to more than 10,000 vulnerable workers in the state who earn their income by collecting and redeeming containers.
- With this bill, the redemption rate in NY could soar from a mere 64% to 90%.

### *Additional Resources:*

- [LWVNYS Environmental Budget Testimony](#)
- [Bottle Bill Hearing](#)

## **The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act ([S4246B](#) Harckam/[A5322B](#) Glick)**

Plastic accounts for nearly all packaging that cannot be reused or effectively recycled - but two bills in New York could transform that. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act would require companies to reduce their packaging by 50% in 12 years, make the remaining packaging

truly reusable or recyclable, get certain toxic chemicals out of packaging, and pay to clean up their packaging waste by reimbursing municipalities and taxpayers for the collection and processing of those materials. The bill would also prohibit incineration and "chemical recycling" (waste-derived fuels) from counting as recycling. **This legislation is in the Finance Committee in the Senate and the Codes Committee in the Assembly.**

*Talking Points:*

- Creates Environmental Standards for Packaging
  - Requires a 50% reduction in single-use packaging over 12 years.
  - Remaining packaging must be recycled effectively
  - Charges packaging companies a fee based on how hard their packaging is to recycle
- Reduces Toxics in Packaging
  - Prohibits 12 toxic materials and chemicals from being used in packaging and establishes a process to expand that list
  - Makes packaging safer for consumers and more recyclable.
- Rejects "Chemical Recycling" which is False Recycling
  - Prevents "advanced recycling" or "chemical recycling" from counting as recycling
  - Most false recycling turns plastic into fossil fuel to be burned; others downcycle plastic rather than recycling it.
  - False recycling perpetuates our reliance on virgin plastic production, which hurts Environmental Justice communities during extraction, production, and disposal.
- Saves Taxpayer Dollars
  - Taxpayers and municipalities are burdened with the costs of managing packaging waste. Companies that created the packaging waste problem should pay for the management of packaging waste, not taxpayers.
  - Use remaining funds to invest in infrastructure that reduces waste (dishwashing equipment in schools and Meals on Wheels programs), reuse and refill infrastructure, and improvements to the recycling system.
- Does NOT Put the Packaging Industry in Charge
  - Includes reduction and recycling requirements in the law.
  - Does not include major loopholes.
  - Maintains strong oversight of the packaging companies.
  - Establishes a new Office of Inspector General to oversee the program.

*Additional Resources:*

- [LWVNYS Memo of Support](#)
- [Packaging Reduction Hearing](#)

### **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](http://www.lwvny.org). **Please fill out a Post-Lobby Report form online via [this link](#) after your meeting.** 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](mailto:erica@lwvny.org)

## Tips for Lobbying

### Lobbying While Remote

#### Preparation

1. **Making the appointment:** Similar to in-person meetings, the best method to schedule an appointment is to contact the legislator's district office and request to make 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 some possible meetings dates and the names of the members who will be 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 experienced in 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 to 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.***

## Lobbying in Person 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 course of the visit.

## General Tips for a Successful Visit

- 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](mailto: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:**