

# STATE VOTER

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## Standing Together, Defending Democracy February 2025

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With the recent shift of the nation, the League of Women Voters is always prepared to defend democracy! This month we honor the legacy of those whose came before as we celebrate Black History Month! Check out these updates from this month's State Voter.



### President's Message

Nancy Rosenthal [nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com](mailto:nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com)

On February 14th, the League will celebrate its 105th birthday—a day to celebrate our achievements! Leagues across the state and the country are invited to join at **11am ET** at a [virtual birthday rally](#) where we can come together to honor our accomplishments and reaffirm our commitment to empowering voters and defending

democracy. Let's make it a memorable celebration!

League has embarked on the first 100-day campaign: [Women Defend Democracy](#). This campaign focuses on the areas of our work where the League is an expert and can have the deepest impact: democracy education, voting rights, the Electoral College, protecting democratic organizations and institutions, and reproductive freedoms. LWVUS staff have been building out plans for how we are going to lean into a national response strategy during the first 100 days of the incoming administration. A lot will come at us, and we can't respond to everything. Those wondering about the title of the campaign can find background by reading [Why We Will Remain the League of WOMEN Voters | League of Women Voters](#)

In the coming weeks, LWVNYS staff and Board members will be meeting to model the three tiers for New York State and develop a plan for how both the State and local Leagues will respond. We'll be sure to update you next month with the plan and strategies!

At the LWVUS 2024 Convention, delegates voted to move forward with a study on the federal judiciary. The study, aimed at addressing concerns about judicial accountability, transparency, independence, and ethics, will be fast-tracked with results announced at the LWVUS 2025 Council in June. Local League responses are due by April 15, 2025, and will cover the U.S. Supreme Court and other Article III federal courts. Information about the Federal Judiciary Study and research materials are available on [the FJS Page](#) on the League Management Site, [the biweekly League Updates](#), and the Federal Judiciary Study discussion

## Board of Directors Announcements

### Issues and Advocacy

#### **Sally Robinson, 1st Vice President/ Issues & Advocacy-**

At the League's 2023 Convention, members voted to conduct two studies, one on the approval process of New York State's voting systems and the other on rank choice voting and open primaries. The two committees finished their work this fall and the study materials were mailed to all local Leagues in December and early January. Responses are due May 15, 2025. We are urging all local Leagues to participate in the approval process and have member meetings to discuss the materials and the position statements. Group discussion is an essential part of the study process. . We need as many Leagues as possible to reach the required level of participating Leagues.

Members who cannot attend their local League discussions, or whose local Leagues are not participating in the approval process, may participate via individual response forms. The state will hold two statewide webinars for these members in March and in April (more information to come).

#### **Voting Systems Study**

- [Individual response form \(Voting Systems\)](#)

#### **Rank Choice Voting and Open Primaries Study**

- [Individual response form \(RCV\)](#)

The LWVNYS Convention will be **June 20-22, 2025**. Program planning materials have been released and can be found [here](#). Local Leagues must forward their program planning recommendations to the state League by **March 15, 2025**. This is the only method for suggesting new studies to be adopted at Convention 2025, and the March 15 deadline for submission must be met. Changes in the state League program cannot be suggested for the first time at Convention.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

#### **Regina Tillman, 3rd Vice President/ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion-**

As we progress in the national and state-wide efforts of our organization's Transformation Journey, it is clear that the landscape of this country has changed since the time that we had embarked upon this road. Instilling fear through threats, bullying, intimidation, and more, are the increasingly frequent responses to the efforts of our nation's "better angels" and to those that want to create an even playing field for all by being more inclusive in their practices, policies, and most of all, in their behaviors.

To read more from our 3rd Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on the matter click [here](#).

Upcoming Events:

**February is Black History Month...** a time given to encourage everyone to learn about how Black citizens of America contributed to the history of this country and its advancements. In line with that learning objective, and with the help of several local League DEI Directors, a virtual presentation to all NYS Leagues and their partners is being planned for later in the month. Please look for an email blast coming to you soon to announce the details along with providing shareable information.

## Voter Services

### Nick Doran, 4th Vice President/ Youth & Citizens Education

100% of Local Leagues completed the Fall Voter Service survey. Here are a few highlights from our Local Leagues' Voter Service efforts during this past election season.

Leagues partnered with 425 organizations throughout the year. Nearly half also met with their local Board of Elections. Partners included NCAAP, NYPIRG, local libraries, BOCES, high schools, community colleges, colleges, universities, fraternities and sororities, religious organizations, food pantries, farmers markets, jails, building associations and, nursing homes.

Leagues were busy handing out materials this year! Leagues distributed more than 16,000 flyers, mailed 13,700 postcards, handed out 19,400 palm cards, and hung 12,000 doorhangers. Nearly 8,000 Voter Guide Part I pamphlets were handed out in English and another 1,500 were distributed in Spanish. They also handed out over 9,300 QR codes. They created 21 PSAs, 15 videos, and handed out 335 posters. Leagues also managed to find the time to hold 230 workshops. Thirty-one Leagues used social media, primarily Facebook and Instagram, to get out their message. Leagues posted 277 races to Vote411 this year.

Through all of this, local Leagues recruited 626 new members. The average League gained 16 new members, although the median was six new members.

Please see more highlights from the Voter Service Survey below.

<b>823 Voter Registration Drives Hosted</b> (averaging 22 events per League)	<b>Over 10,000 Voters Registered</b> (averaging 238 registered per League)	<b>Leagues participated in 98 naturalization ceremonies</b>	<b>104 High School Voter Registration Drives hosted in 77 schools</b>	<b>177 College Voter Registration Drives</b>
<b>1,879</b> Volunteers (averaging 49 volunteers per League)	More than <b>4,100</b> Voter Registration Forms Distributed	<b>3,314</b> voters were registered at naturalization ceremonies	<b>3,500</b> voters were registered at high school drives	Nearly <b>2,143</b> voters were registered at college drives
<b>276</b> Drives targeted Under-Resourced Communities	<b>34</b> in-person <b>3</b> virtual & <b>6</b> hybrid candidate forums held	<b>1,676</b> forms were distributed	<b>1,100</b> forms were distributed	Drives were held at <b>63</b> colleges

## Transformation

### Patty MacLeish, Board Member and LWNYS Transformation Lead

As of today, the National League (LWVUS) has changed the League membership and dues' structure. One of the primary goals of this change is to strengthen the state and local Leagues by making two important changes in the dues system. The result will mean that more money will stay in our state and local Leagues, and that the cost of joining will no longer be a major barrier to joining thereby increasing our membership.

Membership portal invitations will be sent to members throughout the week of February 3 on a staggered basis, meaning not all members will receive the invitation on the same day. Don't worry if a fellow member receives an invitation before you and remember to check your junk or spam folder for an email from [membership@lww.org](mailto:membership@lww.org)! Once you have registered with the new platform you will receive a reminder when it is time to renew your dues.

The portal invitation email will include a unique link for you to log in to the membership portal; it will not work for another member. Any member may also log in to the portal from the [LWV.org](https://www.lwv.org) [homepage](https://www.lwv.org/homepage). Current members are not required to log in to the portal until it is time to renew their membership, but logging in now will allow you to set up your account and update your information.

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## Reminders from the State League

**Party Registration Deadline-** February 14th is the deadline to register or change your party registration to vote within your party of choice in the June Primaries. Party registration can be done online via [NY.GOV](https://www.ny.gov) or [DMV.NY.GOV](https://www.dmv.ny.gov) as well as in-person or by-mail. Be sure to consider delivery time to ensure your registration is processed by the **February 14th** deadline.

**Lobby Day 2025-** This year we will be lobbying at the NYS Capitol on **May 6th, 2025**. During this time, we will have the opportunity to speak with local and state representatives on topics and issues that impact us the most. Keep an eye out for a link to sign up!

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## Local League Happenings

Check out these updates from our Local Leagues!

**League of Women Voters Westchester County-** Westchester County will hold a special election to fill the unexpired County Executive term created by former County Executive George Latimer's election to the House of Representatives for Congressional District 16. All registered voters in Westchester County are eligible to vote. The candidates are Kenneth W. Jenkins (D) and Christine A. Sculti (R). The winner of the special election will serve as County Executive until the expiration of the current term on December 31, 2025. Another election will be held in November 2025 for a full term. For more information visit [Voter Information for 2025 County Executive \(Unexpired Term\) Special Election](#)

**League of Women Voters New York City-** The New York City League welcomed State Senator Liz Krueger to its monthly "Lunch with the League" speaker series. Senator Krueger spoke about the 2025 New York State and City Budget put forth by Governor Hochul, explaining its possible implications for New York City and informing us about new legislation in 2025. The next "Lunch with the League" will be held on **February 25 at the New York Society for Ethical Culture**.

**League of Women Voters Northeast Westchester-** Please join LWV Northeast Westchester in congratulating Del Bashkow on becoming a **50-year** member of the League of Women Voters! Del is now a "Life Member". Del has been a vital part of this league, serving many Board roles over the years, including President. Del has also been actively involved with the League's Naturalization Court program, something near and dear to her as a naturalized citizen herself; she came here from England (and was born in Paris). This being the second Life Member for Northeast Westchester, Del joins her friend Peter Rose, who became a Life Member in 2023!

**League of Women Voters Brookhaven -** On Jan 30, at 7 pm on zoom, the Brookhaven league sponsored a presentation on Universal Child Care in New York by Jennifer Rojas, Executive Director of the Child Care Council of Suffolk and member of the Governor's Task Force on Child Care.

**League of Women Voters Broome and Tioga Counties-** On Jan 25, hosted their annual Winter Brunch. Their guests for the day were the Union-Endicott High School members of Amnesty, a group of students who study civic engagement. They had prepared a power point on Women in Politics and all their members participated in their presentation. Broome and Tioga Counties League has been very fortunate this past year, as the members of Amnesty partnered with League members last fall to hold a successful voter registration drive at the high school in advance of the November elections. This student organization is also interested in how the League studies issues and decides on consensus. Broome and Tioga Counties League continues to share information and resources with them.

If you'd like to share what your local League is up to email Xavia at [xavia@lwny.org](mailto:xavia@lwny.org).

## Where in the news is the League of Women Voters?

You may have caught us on TV, in the paper, or on a podcast.

- LWV Rivertowns President, Susan Maggiotto, commented on Voting Rights Legislation in [New York State Senate Kick Off 2025 Session](#) press release from NYS Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins office.

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## LWVUS Corner:

**Stand Up to Xenophobia with LWVUS-** Tell your members of Congress to oppose the SAVE Act. The House and Senate introduced the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, which would require citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering. Learn more about the SAVE Act and how you can get involved [here](#).

**LWVUS Stance on Social Media Platforms and Updates-** Local Leagues and members may have concerns regarding social media, especially with recent changes across various platforms. In response, LWVUS updated its guidance for platforms such as TikTok, Meta, and X (formerly Twitter). View the most up-to-date guidance [on the League Management Site](#).

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