



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK

STATE VOTER

May 2024



President's Message

Nancy Rosenthal

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Another Students Inside Albany (SIA) is in the books! May 19-22 found 59 students from local Leagues across the state touring the Court of Appeals,

learning from the best how to advocate on issue(s), taking an evening stroll around the Empire Plaza, shadowing their Assembly and Senate representative, and learning first hand so much about NY State government and how it operates. Thanks to you, our local Leagues, for sending another great group of students!

The LWVUS convention is in Washington, DC from June 27th through June 30th. All information related to National Convention, including registration and hotel bookings, [can be found here](#). Local League members can learn about issues to be discussed at Convention by seeking out and talking with their Leagues delegate(s) who are attending either in person or virtually. All members are invited always to be observers at Convention. It is an experience like no other!

Have you made a donation yet or set up to be a monthly donor to the NY State League? What is holding you back? Let me hear your concerns. Otherwise, Sign up for those monthly donations to LWVNYS [here](#).

LWVNYS 2024 Council

Presentation:

Handling Bad Actors!

Speakers:

Chelsey Cartwright, LWVUS Program Manager for the Democracy Truth Project, and **Caren Short**, LWVUS Director of Legal and Research

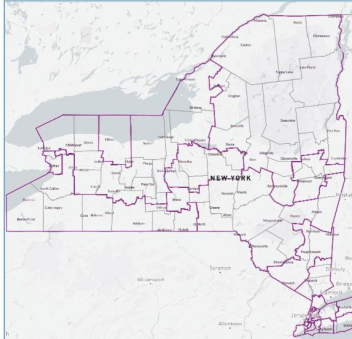
Mark your calendars for **LWVNYS Council** by zoom at 6:30pm Tuesday June

11th. Local League delegates will adopt the League budget for 2024-2025. We also will have two speakers at Council which ***all members can view on the live stream with YouTube***. The topic? **Handling Bad**

Actors! Join **Chelsey Cartwright**, LWVUS Program Manager for the Democracy Truth Project, and **Caren Short**, LWVUS Director of Legal and Research, to discuss how Leagues can respond to bad actors who threaten the election process, spread mis- and disinformation, and intimidate voters and election officials. More information coming soon!

New York Redistricting: What Happened and What's Next?

Come to a conference on New York State redistricting on Tuesday, June 18 at New York Law School (NYC) from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Registration is required - click [here](#) to register. There is no charge to attend.




NEW YORK REDISTRICTING: What Happened and What's Next?

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

New York Law School

Second Floor Events Center
185 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013



RSVP at
www.nyls.edu/CityLawRSVP

In 2014, New York voters approved a constitutional amendment creating a new redistricting system. When first used, the new rules led to chaos and confusion, and a process ending two years later than it should have. This conference, presented by NYLS's New York Elections, Census, and Redistricting Institute, will explore what changed, what happened, and what should shift before 2030 through new constitutional reform.

CLE: 2.0 credits in Areas of Professional Practice (NY transitional and non-transitional)


COST: Free of charge

This event is co-sponsored by the Center for New York City Law and the New York Elections, Census, and Redistricting Institute

Opening Remarks
Anthony W. Crowell, Dean and President, NYLS

Moderator
Jeffrey M. Wice, Adjunct Professor and Senior Fellow, NYLS

Speakers
Brigid Bergin, WNYC & Gothamist
Laura Bierman, NYS League of Women Voters
Dr. Jonathan Cervas, 2022 NYS Special Master
Hon. John Faso, former U.S. House Member
Lucia Gomez, NYC Central Labor Council
Hon. David Imamura, Former Chair, NYS Independent Redistricting Commission
Ken Jenkins, Chair, NYS Independent Redistricting Commission
Elizabeth OuYang, APA VOICE
Grace Pyun, NYC Districting Commission
Steven Romalewski, CUNY Graduate Center Mapping Service
Cesar Ruiz, LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Esmeralda Simmons, Activist Attorney
Jerry Vattamala, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Ben Weinberg, Citizens Union



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Voter Services

Kathy Meany, VP for Voter Services

kzmeany@gmail.com

Local leagues are actively engaged in their communities with voter registration drives and voter information events, and are ramping up for June Primary Elections. Numerous candidates forums were organized for local School Boards during May, and now volunteers are organizing candidates forums for many contested races across the state

COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY 2024	PRIMARY ELECTIONS Tuesday, June 25
Early Voting Days	June 15 - 23
Register in Person or Online by	June 15
Register by Mail	Must be received by June 15
Apply for absentee or early mail ballot in person by	June 24
Apply for absentee or early mail ballot by mail/online	Must be received by June 15
Deliver ballot in person by close of polls	June 25 to poll site or BOE
Deliver ballot by mail	Must be postmarked by June 25 Must be received by July 2

NYS Primary Elections:

- U.S. Congressional Districts in NYS
- U.S. Senate in NYS District 20
- NYS Senate
- NYS Assembly

Check Your Districts: <https://www.latfor.state.ny.us/maps/>

Vote411.org

When you are seeking voting information, VOTE411.org is the perfect tool to use. This is a **national** voter guide. Everyone can check their voter registration status from here; register to vote; and obtain ballot and candidates' information. Feel free to share this website information with your family and friends who reside anywhere in the U.S.

Text Alerts

Want to see reminders of deadlines - or reminders to vote? Text **VOTENY to 474747** and receive timely notices and reminders of deadlines concerning upcoming elections! Tell your friends to sign up too!



Issues and Advocacy

Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy

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Bill Status Update

We have 6 days left in this legislative session. Below are the bills that we are continuing to follow.

ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) (S6173B/A7052C)

This legislation has passed the Senate and is in the Ways and Means Committee in the Assembly. We are going to push hard to get it to the floor for a vote next week.

Democracy During Detention Act (S6875/A9612)

This bill is in the Election Law Committee in the Senate and Assembly.

Better Notification of Purge from Voter Rolls (S6168/A6764) This legislation has moved to the Finance Committee in the Senate and is in the Election Law Committee in the Assembly.

Student Voter Empowerment Act (S9676)

This bill was finally introduced in the Senate by Senator Lea Webb. The only downside is that the bill does not include private colleges and universities as we had hoped it would. We hope to get the bill amended to include private institutions before it's passed. The bill is currently in the Election Law Committee in the Senate.

Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237C May/A6353A Glick)

This legislation is on a C print in the Senate and has been sent back to the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. It passed through the Assembly Rules, Ways and Means, and Codes Committees on May 7th and now we are just working to push it to the floor for a vote.

The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act (S4246B Harckam/A5322B Glick) We participated in a Lobby Day for both the Packaging Reduction Act and the Bigger Better Bottle Bill. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act This legislation is in the Finance Committee in the Senate, and we are working to push it to the floor for a vote in the Assembly.

Additional Bills That We Have Been Tracking Election Administration Reform

These are two bills that have broad bi-partisan support from the Election Commissioner's Association and would provide much needed staffing support and resources for our county boards of elections.

A919B/S116B- This bill requires local election commissioners outside of New York City

to be full time employees. It is on a B print and has been sent back to the Election Law Committee in the Assembly. It has passed in the Senate.

A1258A/S644- This bill sets minimum staffing requirements for local boards of elections. This bill is in the Assembly Election Law Committee and it has passed in the Senate.

Medical Aid in Dying (A00995/S02445C)

This bill would provide that a mentally competent, terminally ill patient may request medication to be self-administered for the purpose of hastening the patient's death provided the requirements set forth in the act are met. This bill is on the C print in the Senate and Assembly and we are working on pushing it to the floor for a vote.

Lawsuits Impacting Legislation and Amendments

Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government Ruled Unconstitutional

A state appellate court upheld a lower court decision finding that New York's current ethics watchdog commission (COELIG) unconstitutional. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, brought the lawsuit after the commission started to investigate his \$5 million book COVID book deal. In a 5-0 ruling, a mid-level appellate panel of judges ruled that the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government, the oversight board that administers the state's ethics laws, violated the state constitution. Read more [here](#).

Early Vote by Mail

On Thursday, a decision came out of a state appellate court on the Early Vote by Mail case filed by Elise Stefanik. The lower court decision in the Stefanik case, which held that Early Vote by Mail is constitutional was affirmed unanimously. Read more [here](#).

NY ERA Removed from Ballot (for now)

Earlier this month, a Rochester judge ruled that the State Senate made a procedural error when approving the Equal Rights Amendment. This ruling removed the NY ERA amendment from the November ballot.

The plaintiff is an outgoing State Assembly Member (Marjorie Byrnes). Byrnes argued that the NY State Senate did not follow the procedure laid out in Section 19 Article 1 of the State Constitution, which explains how to amend the state Constitution. The piece they are highlighting is that the Senate voted in a special session before receiving the opinion from the AG.

More than a dozen constitutional amendments have proceeded in this exact manner in the last 50 years — and all made it on the ballot.

We are confident this lawsuit will be overturned on appeal. The AG has already appealed this to a higher court. We do not foresee a scenario where the opportunity for New Yorkers to vote on the amendment is meaningfully impacted or impeded. This November, New Yorkers will be able to vote on the ERA to protect our rights and freedoms. Our focus will remain on educating and empowering voters so that they can vote to pass this amendment in 2024. Read more about the lawsuit [here](#) and [here](#).



LWVNYS Lobby Day

On Tuesday, May 7th we were at the Capitol with 40 local League members from across the state advocating for League issues. In the morning we listened to League Issue Specialists talk about elections, the environment, justice reform, healthcare, rural issues, and medical aid in dying. Then we headed up to the Capitol where Leagues had many meetings with their representatives.

That day we also participated in a large press conference for Medical Aid in Dying with Compassion and Choices. New Yorkers deserve to have autonomy over all medical and health decisions and that includes the right to die with dignity, which is why we continue to push for passage of this bill in NY.



2024 Students Inside Albany Conference May 19-22, 2024

The 2024 Students Inside Albany Conference was held on May 19-22 with 59 attendees representing 40 local Leagues, MAL Units and ILO's. The students came from all over New York State from Long Island to Buffalo and Plattsburgh to Binghamton. They ranged from sophomores to seniors in high school. They were energetic and enthusiastic to learn about New York State government.

[Click here](#) to read the summary of the conference.



Thanks to all of our volunteer chaperones: Mary Rosch (LWV of Albany), Ann Leiter (LWV of Central Nassau), and Susan Cushman (LWV of Central Nassau). We couldn't host this program without the tremendous work and support of these volunteers!

Thanks also to our co-sponsors who, along with the state League's Education Foundation support, allow us to offer this program with no cost to the students (thanks also to local Leagues who do pay to send a 2nd student).



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Regina Tillman, VP for DEI

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Did you know ... that the month of May was established by Congress in 1977 as Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Heritage Month? It was designate as a time to learn about and to celebrate the impact of Asians and Pacific Islanders in America.

Per the government website, <https://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/About.html>, the month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. It was said that the majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Did you know ... that June 19th was made a federal holiday in 2021 with President Biden's signing of the *Juneteenth National Independence Day Act* into law. The end of slavery in America, as we knew it, finally came on June 19, 1865, when Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas, to announce the Act to its still enslaved residents. "Finally" is the word used here because this announcement occurred sometime after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, or Executive Order, issued on January 1, 1863. (Note: the Proclamation only applied to Confederate States, which is a story unto itself!)

Opportunities such as these could be embraced by local Leagues as a way to learn about fellow Americans who are often different from the neighbor next door, and in ways that are non-threatening and often insightful. As a League member, perhaps you can think of ways to host discussions centered on an Observance or a Holiday as occurring in several months of the year, or ways to connect to the education and the celebrations occurring in surrounding communities.

Suggest your ideas to your Board and be ready to volunteer to help make your ideas come to fruition. DEI entails learning about your history as an American, and by that, it is meant ALL your history. Through this openness to learn about the perspectives, value systems, achievements, and struggles of others, we grow in not only knowledge but in empathy.

And you need not try to do them all! Concentrate your League-related resources and efforts on what may help your league connect with larger pockets of diverse populations nearby... for example, some counties in NYS have a significantly higher number of Asian residents in their county than other chapters and yet, there are no Asian Americans in their membership pipeline! That goes as well for the counties with a sizeable Black or Latino population that also have not yet found a way to engage with them, so they become interested in joining the League. If we put our education and learning in the forefront, it may make connecting with others easier to do.

Ablism is yet another obstacle to connecting with 10% if not closer to 20% of the American population. For many of us, knowing the story of Helen Keller is about the extent of our knowledge when it comes to those who are differently abled. The LWWNYS DEI Committee is currently working to ensure that, this year, the online **"21-Day Disability Equity Habit-Building Challenge"** is definitely conducted and made available to all who wish to participate in the growth that this type of challenge creates. Plus, there are plans for a virtual panel discussion to follow the Challenge, with guests sharing their different perspectives, roles, and ideas for doing better with connecting to those with disabilities. Thus, in June, I invite you to look for an email announcement of the Challenge along with registration info attached. I do hope you will join us but if you miss seeing the announcement by June 28th, feel free to email me to obtain the details: rmt370@gmail.com. Save the date! The start date for the Challenge will be Sunday, July 7th!

Local League News

The **Cooperstown and Albany County Leagues** will co-sponsor a candidates' forum in Delanson for the Democratic candidates for New York's 102 Assembly District in advance of the June 25 Primary.

LWW of NYC is celebrating its 105th birthday on June 5 with a private tour of the NY Public Library on 5th Avenue!

The **Syracuse League** presented a showing of the documentary, "Deciding Vote." The producer and director of the documentary, Rob Lyons was our guest. The film tells the story of how one deciding vote in 1970 by Assemblyman George Michaels of Auburn NY, gave women the right to an abortion in New York State. "Deciding

Vote” is a history of a woman’s rights over her reproductive health as well as a profile in political courage.

LWV of Larchmont/Mamaroneck’s annual luncheon was focused on the issue, Empowering our Children through Education in Civics, Climate Change and Experiential Learning, with speakers: Attorney Michael Rebell, Executive Director of the Center for Educational Equity; Climate Leader Harriet Shugarman, Executive Director of Climate Mama; and Barbara Bartoletti, Former League of Women Voters NYS Legislative Director.

LWV of Rivertowns’ annual meeting featured AJ Woodson, Editor-in-Chief of Black Westchester Magazine, who shared stories from his book, Black Westchester Celebrates Black Women of Westchester. In the words of Mr. Woodson, "Black Women have been shattering the glass ceilings over and over and over again. . . I wanted to put as many of them as I can in one book as a celebration of the achievements of African American Women in Westchester."

Recently, **LWV of Utica/Rome** members Germaine Gogel, Lorrie Wasielewski, and Karen McBride participated in a naturalization ceremony celebrating 52 new-citizen candidates hailing from 20 countries. We felt fortunate to have registered to vote 34 of the new citizens, as it was a joyful event for them, along with their families and friends assembled in this “packed” 3rd floor courtroom of the Alexander Pirnie Federal Building in Utica.

At a recent meeting of **LWV of Tompkins County**, “Food For All” was presented by the Natural Resources and Health committees. A discussion of our food system, from production to access to waste, was held with speakers Don Barber, Chair of the Food Policy Council of Tompkins County and Beth Radow, LWVNYS Chair of the Energy, Agriculture and Environment Committee.

The **Smithtown League** and the Smithtown Library recently collaborated on a Young Adult Voter Registration Drive, offering registration forms and counseling from League members at each of the Library's four locations focusing on college students.

At its annual meeting, the **LWV of Scarsdale** hosted Jon Elsen, Editor in Chief and Co-Publisher of the Rye Record who spoke on the topic, *Local News, Community, and Democracy*.

LWV of Saratoga will have a table for voter registration and educational materials at the Juneteenth Celebration in Saratoga. With the theme, “The Responsibility of Freedom,” this year’s program contributors include Community Voices of Praise Choir, poet D. Colin, dancer Donna Boykins, musical artists Ethan Crowley and Dan Berggren, Saratoga Springs poet laureate Dr. Joseph Bruchac, actors Jocelyn Khoury and Kim Wafer, and Donald Hyman’s “Freedom Players” from Albany’s Israel A.M.E. Church (the oldest Black church in upstate NY!).

The board of **LWV of Rochester Metro Area** has recommended that it convert from its current 501(c)(4) status (under IRS regulations) to become a 501(c)(3). To change this status, the membership must approve revisions to our NY Incorporation Certificate and our Bylaws. Members will be asked to vote on these changes at the Annual Meeting on June 6.

LWV of Rensselaer has organized its annual Summer Picnic. Members, family and friends are invited to the Annual Summer Picnic. Walking trails, bird watching and more available or just hang out with friends.

LWV of Northeast Westchester held 2 school board candidate forums and registered 50 new voters at area high schools this spring.

The book club of **LWV of Mid-Hudson** recently discussed Yuri Haran's “21 Lessons for the 21st Century” and highly recommends it to all League members. In

June the group will discuss "Collapse - How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed" by Pulitzer Prize winning author, Jared Diamond.



LWVUS Convention: June 27-30, 2024 Washington, DC

LWVUS Convention is coming. If you are interested in attending and representing your local League, contact your League's leaders. See all info on LWVUS

website [here](#). Register now [here](#) and reserve a hotel room at the Washington Hilton [here](#). All local Leagues are entitled to one delegate and then one more for each 50 members (as of the Jan. 31 US database) thereafter.

[Donate to LWNYS](#)

[Donate to LWNYS Education Foundation](#)

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