

STATE VOTER

Heat Up the Summer with Democracy August 2025

As the summer sun blazes on, so does the unwavering dedication of our local League members. This month, we celebrate the tireless efforts that are keeping our democracy alive and well at the grassroots level. In the spirit of the late John Lewis, let us continue to make "good trouble"—necessary trouble—for equity, justice, and the future we believe in. The work doesn't pause for the season, and neither do we. Let's keep moving forward together. Here is a look at your August State Voter.



State Leaders Message

Nancy Rosenthal, President, nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com

Erica Smitka, Executive Director, erica@lwny.org

As we head toward the November elections, it's a great time to reflect on the vital role local elections play in strengthening the foundation of our democracy. Local elections have a powerful impact on our daily lives, as they determine who oversees vital services like schools, police, public transportation, housing, and infrastructure. These elections often have very low turnout, meaning each vote carries significant weight in shaping policies and priorities. Truly every vote counts in local races. By voting locally, you're helping decide how your neighborhood is run and who will represent your interests at the most immediate level. Across New York, our local Leagues have been hard at work doing outreach for local elections by, hosting voter registration drives, organizing candidate forums, and sharing vital election information through Vote411.

At the state level, LWVNYS has been actively supporting this work by distributing printed Voter Guides, assisting with Vote411 coordination, and preparing several statewide voter education initiatives.

Additionally, the LWVNYS Board is reviewing all Directions to the Board we received at Convention, including the proposed Empty Chair Policy, and will address them during the upcoming September 26 Board Meeting.

If you have questions or need support, don't hesitate to reach out to the State League office.

Together, let's make democracy work — every day, every year.

In League,
Nancy and Erica



Board Announcements

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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

The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) continues to emphasize that true progress in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is not achieved through one-time or transactional efforts. At the June LWVNYS Convention, the “Building Bridges to Excellence” Recognition Award honored the **League of Women Voters of the**

Hamptons, Shelter Island, and North Fork for their exceptional commitment to DEI. Led by Terry Wildrick and supported by President Susan Wilson, their initiative stood out for its intentionality, reflection on both successes and challenges, and its alignment with the goals of sustainable DEI practices.

The review process, led by Committee Co-chair Crystal Joseph, also recognized three additional Leagues—**Albany, Rivertowns, and Syracuse Metro**—for their thoughtful submissions. These entries, along with past honorees from 2022 and 2023, are now part of an evolving collection of DEI “Success Stories.” Collectively, these efforts reflect a growing awareness and response to systemic issues like racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, reinforcing the League’s commitment to fostering a more inclusive democracy.



Click [here](#) to read more.

Updates from the State League

Check out the new additions to the LWV NYS website!

We’ve been hard at work to make some necessary updates to our website. Check out the home page at www.lwvny.org and check out materials for members only (such as Convention workshop information) on our League Management site here:

<https://lwvny.org/league-management/>

Sign up for the State League’s New Texting Service!

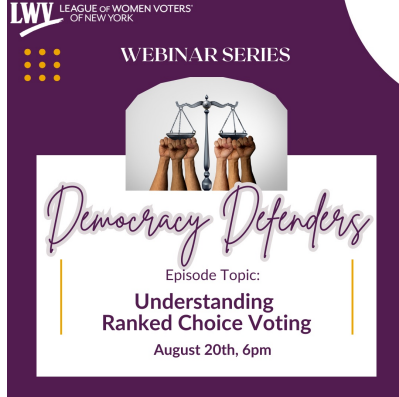
Want updates around election time with need-to-know information like when early voting starts and where your poll site is? Sign up [here](#) to receive texts from the League.

League of Women Voters US CEO, Celina Stewart visited Western, NY to kick off the Chautauqua Lecture Series’ at the Chatauqua Institution. With the assistance of LWV NYS to facilitate membership attendance, many local League members met staff from LWVUS for dinner the night before and saw Celina speak on Monday. To read more about CEO Stewart’s speech click [here](#).

The **Democracy During Detention Act (S440/A2121)** continues to move forward as key stakeholders, advocates, and coalition partners gather in New York City **Wednesday, August 6, 2025**. The convening will focus on strategy, messaging, and next steps to ensure that every eligible New Yorker—no matter where they’re held—has real access to the ballot.

To get involved, contact Clyanna Lightbourn, Campaign Director, at clyanna@lwvny.org.

Join us in becoming a Democracy Defender! The League of Women Voters of New York State thanks all who attended last month’s episodes of our civic education and advocacy webinar series, *Democracy Defenders*. If you missed our recent episode, click [here](#) to view.



Join us for our next episode with League of Women Voters Rochester Metro Area President, Barbara Grosh, for an educational seminar on how ranked choice voting works. As announced at Convention, the State League has adopted a new position supporting ranked choice voting. This marks an important shift in our advocacy efforts and it's important that members understand how RCV works and why it matters. [Register](#) TODAY!

To view all previous episodes of the Democracy Defenders Webinar series, click [here](#).

LWVNY Convention 2025- The League of Women Voters of New York State Convention was an opportunity for members to gather in person and for delegates to take an active role in moving the League of Women Voters forward for the next two years. We would like to thank all of attendees for your feedback. To read a full recap of the 2025 State Convention, click [here](#) for the 2025 Convention Summary.



"Good Trouble Live On" Recap

July 17th marked the 5th anniversary of Congressman John Lewis's passing. To honor his legacy of making "Good Trouble" for effective change, communities across the nation hosted rallies/protests to stand up against the current state of our democracy.



League of Women Voters NYS Democracy During Detention Act Campaign Director, Clyanna Lightbourn, joined Ulster County's 'Good Trouble Lives On' rally. She emphasized that too many eligible individuals in New York jails remain unable to vote—not due to law, but systemic neglect—and detailed her work advancing the Democracy During Detention Act to secure absentee ballot access behind bars.

Special shout out to all of our league members who joined in the "Good Trouble Lives On" rallies to stand up for democracy and mobilize voters.

Local Leagues make Good Trouble Live On

Shout out to all local leagues that hosted or participated in the **Good Trouble Lives On** events in their areas. Your engagement helped ensure the day was executed with clarity and purpose, reinforcing the ongoing significance of this initiative.

League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara- On July 17, 2025, the Buffalo-Niagara League held the John Lewis **Good Trouble Lives On** Rally in downtown Buffalo. Executive Mark Polancarz, NYS Assembly members Taisha St. Jean Tard, Carla Speranzo, Jeffrtey Elder, Common Council member Zeneta Everhart along with community leaders spoke to the crowd of approximately 500 enthusiastic protesters.





League of Women Voters Schenectady County- in partnership with the NAACP, Unite NY and First United Methodist Church, led a successful **Good Trouble Lives On** rally on July 17th. About 200 people gathered in Collins Park, waved protest signs along a busy street and then marched across a bridge, symbolic of John Lewis. The rally received a front-page article in the local newspaper, The Gazette, and several new members. Pictures are also available on their Facebook page, view [here](#).

League of Women Voters Port Washington- Manhasset- Despite sweltering heat, LWV of Port Washington-Manhasset co-hosted the only **Good Trouble Lives On** event in Nassau County. Their partnership with the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Shelter Rock was so successful, they are looking forward to planning future events. About 500 people attended including members from other Nassau County Leagues and 8 other non-profit groups. The rally had 11 speakers, including President Regina Goutevenier, catchy chants and guitar-accompanied folk songs. The co-hosts received over 100 individual feedback from those wildly enthusiastic about the energy, about learning more, about leaving with a list of action items.

Local League Happenings

Check out these updates from our Local Leagues!

League of Women Voters of Saratoga County- On **August 14th**, League of Women Voters Saratoga County will hold their **monthly Book Club** gathering on the second Thursday of each month at 1:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to join, even if you have not read or finished reading the book. This month's book is *Help Wanted* by Adelle Waldman. Contact Francine Rodger at lwvsaratoga@aol.com to receive the Zoom link.

League of Women Voters North Country- The Commemoration of Women's Equality Day in Clinton County is a collaborative celebration sponsored by several groups - including the League of Women Voters of the North Country. This event commemorates the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920 which ensured that no one was barred from voting due to their gender. August 26th, 1920 was the finish of a 72-year battle for women as a gender, nationwide, to get the right to vote. We use this day to thank and recognize the many women who fought for this right, share some of the history that followed, and discuss some current issues we need to be aware of. On **August 26th**, Women's Equality Day will be commemorated at the Kent-Delord House Museum at 1 pm. To read the full press release, click [here](#).

League of Women Voters Rochester Metro Area- Inspired by League of Women Voters Manatee County, Florida, member Barbara Grosh developed a lawn sign for league members to utilize in leading conversations to help educate voters about the current political situation. The goal for these lawn signs is to assist in leading to non-confrontational conversations between neighbors and families where the concepts behind the Constitution and due process can be discussed. They can also stimulate conversations when displayed at various events and rallies. If interested in purchasing a sign, click [here](#).



League of Women Voters of East Nassau - On July 19, 2025, at Jones Beach, volunteers from the League of Women Voters of East Nassau tabled at the Cyndi Laufer's concert thanks to a

partnership that LWWUS built with Cyndi's tour.



League of Women Voters Rockland County- On July 4th the Rockland League read the Declaration of Independence in the Nyack Town Square (Hezekiah Walker Memorial Park). The mayor of Nyack, Joseph Rand, promoted the event and is pictured introducing the members who participated in the reading.

U.S. Corner

Unite and Rise 8.5 Power Playbook Released

LWWUS just released the second Unite and Rise 8.5 Power Playbook. This new installment builds on the tools and strategies from the first playbook — helping us mobilize effectively ahead of key civic moments. Check it out here and connect with your local League to take action: [Unite & Rise Power Playbook 2: August 2025 – October 2025 | League of Women Voters](#). Sign the Unite and Rise Commitment Form here: [Join Unite and Rise 8.5 | League of Women Voters](#)

Hold Congress Accountable

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act was enacted in early July. As members of Congress head home to connect with their constituents, it's time for us to let them know how we feel about the bill. Read the LWWUS blog [here](#) to get a better understanding of how the new law will affect the lives of everyday Americans, including defunding Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, and Planned Parenthood.

Check out the resources here to connect with your members before they return to Washington DC on September 2: [Hold Congress Accountable for the One Big Beautiful Bill | League of Women Voters](#)

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