

2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

League of Women Voters® of New York State



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW YORK STATE

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE

The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) is a unique, multi-issue, nonpartisan, political organization. It encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through advocacy and education. We can take action under all of our positions, as outlined in LWVNYS Impact on Issues. We also often take action under national positions identified in the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Impact on Issues. This booklet highlights some of the key issues that we anticipate taking significant action on in the 2026 Legislative Session.

TAKE ACTION! IT'S EASY!

To take action on the issues listed in the brochure or any other issue, contact your elected officials and make your voice heard!

To learn more about a particular issue and/or how you can help advance our legislative agenda, you can contact LWVNYS office at 518-465-4162, email lwvny@lwvny.org, or contact a member of the LWVNYS Issues Committee:

Nancy Rosenthal, President
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Sally Robinson, VP/ Issues & Advocacy
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Erica Smitka, Executive Director
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For Information on the State Legislature and Pending Legislation

<https://nyassembly.gov/>

<https://nysenate.gov>

<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/>

(Bill Text, Status, Summaries, Sponsor Memos, Floor Votes)

Join the League!

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all persons 16 years and older. There are 40 local Leagues across New York State. Joining at any level automatically confers membership at every level: local, state and national and Membership provides the opportunity to be actively involved in local, state and national issues.

Why Become a Member?

Because you want to make a difference. You know the future depends on people like you — people learning about the issues, speaking out and seeking positive solutions to the problems confronting our communities and our country. When you join the League of Women Voters, you're doing something good for democracy — and good for you.

As a member of the League, you will:

- Stay Informed About Issues and Government
- Make Your Voice Heard
- Sharpen Your Advocacy Skills

Visit www.lwvny.org to join today!

ELECTION LAW

Early Voting

The League supports ensuring adequate funding for early voting, with expanded site locations and hours as necessary to provide fair access to all voters.

State and County Boards of Elections Reform

The League supports improved and more professional operations of county and state boards of election. League also supports improving the timeliness and transparency of tabulating and reporting of election results to the public, while ensuring voters are given a chance to cure absentee ballot deficiencies and voter intent is protected.

Eliminating the Voter Registration Deadline

The League supports passing a constitutional amendment which would allow for a same day registration structure to be implemented.

Access to the Ballot

The League supports equitable access to the ballot for all eligible voters, including individuals detained in county jails who retain their constitutional right to vote.

GOOD GOVERNMENT REFORM

Campaign Finance

The League supports meaningful reform of current campaign finance laws as necessary for implementation of a successful public financing system. Priorities for reform include further reduction of all contribution limits, including contributions to parties and special "pay-to-play" limits on contributions by lobbyists and those who do business with the state. The League believes that party housekeeping accounts should be banned or significantly reduced and that transfers of campaign contributions should not be allowed. Personal use of campaign funds by candidates should be banned and campaign fundraising during the legislative session restricted. The League believes that there needs to be independent and robust enforcement for all candidates.

Ethics

The League supports effective implementation and improvements of ethics laws. The state ethics enforcement agency should provide independent, effective and transparent monitoring of state ethics to ensure it provides for effective and independent monitoring of state ethics.

HEALTHCARE

The League supports single-payer public financing to promote affordable, equitable, quality healthcare for all while reducing administrative and drug costs. The League uses evidence-based public reviews to identify inequitable health access and outcomes, currently prioritizing investment in public health, disease prevention, improved access for underserved residents, expanded delivery options, evidence-based cost-containment, state-wide provider shortages, and health-infrastructure deserts. An emerging priority is to reduce how much public funding goes to administrative overhead, third-party for-profit middlemen, and private equity.

Medical Aid in Dying

The League supports the option of medical aid in dying for the terminally ill.

JUDICIAL ISSUES

Streamlining of the Court System

The League supports a unified state court system. The League believes judges should be chosen on the basis of merit and continues to support improvements in the judicial selection process. Candidates should be proactively encouraged to participate in the current system of Independent Judicial Elections Qualifications Commissions.

Support of Adequate Indigent Defense Services

The League supports a consistent statewide system with oversight by an Independent Public Defense Commission to ensure indigent defense is more equitable and uniform throughout the state.

JUSTICE REFORM

Alternatives to Incarceration

The League supports alternatives to incarceration for appropriate offences. Drug and mental health courts that divert defendants to a more rehabilitative process and assist placement in reentry programs should be monitored and improved where appropriate.

Fundamentally Reform Our Criminal Justice System

The League supports a criminal justice system that is at all stages just, effective, equitable and transparent.

This includes the elimination of systemic bias affecting predominantly marginalized communities; fairly treating those who are incarcerated, including parole proceedings, payment for their labor and assuring their right to vote; policing practices that promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve; collaboration between government and community throughout every stage of the criminal justice system; humane treatment and the rehabilitation of those who have been incarcerated; and reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law-enforcement programs and policies.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Energy and Climate Change

The League supports legislation, regulation and executive action to address the climate emergency and protect natural resources, public health, and the economy. The League supports renewable energy policy across all sectors including the use of subsidies to establish climate justice.

Eliminating Waste-Optimizing the Environment

The League supports policies to safeguard our air quality, waterways and aquifers from industrial operations that use, emit or dispose of chemicals, hazardous waste or industrial waste. We support actions to move New York toward a Zero Waste future, including improved and expanded bottle recycling and manufacturer fiscal responsibility to develop safer, streamlined packaging without endocrine disrupting chemicals.

Agriculture

The League supports policies and practices that protect food production (including pollinators) and food safety and minimizes waste at all levels of distribution including the statewide redirection of edible excess food away from the waste stream and to the state's food insecure population.

STATE FINANCES AND EDUCATION

Greater Equity in Education Financing

The League supports court-ordered state aid increases being funded irrespective of the property tax cap. The League also opposes the use of "geographic shares" as a basis for allocating either operating or capital aid and believes that the past practices of "holding harmless" school districts and apportioning incremental aid by geographic shares perpetuate inequities for both pupils and taxpayers.

Reform of the Property Tax System

The League supports uniform equitable assessment and property tax systems. The League accepts the

necessity of local property taxes, while at the same time opposing overreliance on property taxes. The League favors implementing a property tax circuit breaker based on need, with an annual cost of living adjustment (in lieu of the STAR program) to alleviate the impact of high property taxes on some households.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Fair Pay

The League supports fair pay reforms, including passage of equal-pay-for-job titles-of-comparable-worth legislation.

Childcare Access

The League supports access to affordable childcare, the lack of which is a pressing problem in rural areas where it negatively impacts rural economies by keeping parents, especially women, out of the workforce.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Domestic Violence

The League supports measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence. We also support protections against discrimination for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

Human Trafficking

The League supports efforts to stop human forced labor and sex trafficking through legislation and changes in public policy. Victims of human trafficking should be provided with services to facilitate integration into the community.

RURAL ISSUES

Broadband and Healthcare Access

The League supports Digital Equity including access to efficient, high speed, and affordable internet as a public good for all residents in their homes, schools, and businesses regardless of geographic location or neighborhood demographics along with public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access media which is now increasingly accessible only over the internet. Rural healthcare is increasingly dependent on expanded telehealth, and state funding for financially precarious EMTs, hospitals, and clinics.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul

NYS Capitol Building
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For additional information, please visit the Governor's Website: www.governor.ny.gov

New York State Senate

c/o Your Senator, Room #, Albany, NY 12247
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New York State Assembly

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New York State Legislature Legislative Session Information

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