

STATE VOTER

Happy Women's History Month March 2026

During Women's History Month, we honor the generations of trailblazers who have expanded rights, representation, and opportunities for women across the nation. The enduring impact of the League of Women Voters of New York State reflects this legacy in action, empowering voters, strengthening democracy, and championing informed civic participation for communities throughout New York.



State Leaders Message

Nancy Rosenthal, President,
nancyrosenthal9@gmail.com

Erica Smitka, Executive Director, erica@lwwny.org

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at our regional trainings on four Saturdays between February and April.

Thank you to State League staff, your State Board, and the volunteers at host Leagues across the state for the tireless hours of preparation. These trainings may appear seamless, but they require significant dedication of time, financial resources, and thoughtful coordination to make them successful. The day is valuable not only for new members, but also for seasoned leaders throughout Leagues across New York. If you have not registered, please do so [NOW!](#)

If there is a defining theme of the current federal administration, it is the continued effort to make it harder for *everyone* to vote, particularly through the SAVE Act suite of bills. League remains firmly opposed to documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC). DPOC is unnecessary: it is already illegal for noncitizens to register and vote in federal or state elections. These proposals do not protect elections; they create new barriers and seek to divide us. We must continue urging Congress to oppose these bills. There is also the Civic Action Toolkit with valuable resources for acting in solidarity against ICE, available [here](#).

On February 10, we witnessed a troubling intrusion into New York's election administration when the Department of Justice sought documentation directly from the Ulster County Board of Elections. The League of Women Voters of New York State, League of Women Voters of Mid-Hudson, and the League of Women Voters of the United States responded with a [public statement](#).

On the League's 106th birthday, February 14, LWVUS President Dianna Wynn reflected on the state of the League as we head into the 2026 election season. View [here](#).
On February 24, LWVUS CEO Celina Stewart responded to President Trump's State of the Union. View [here](#).



Both are worth your time.

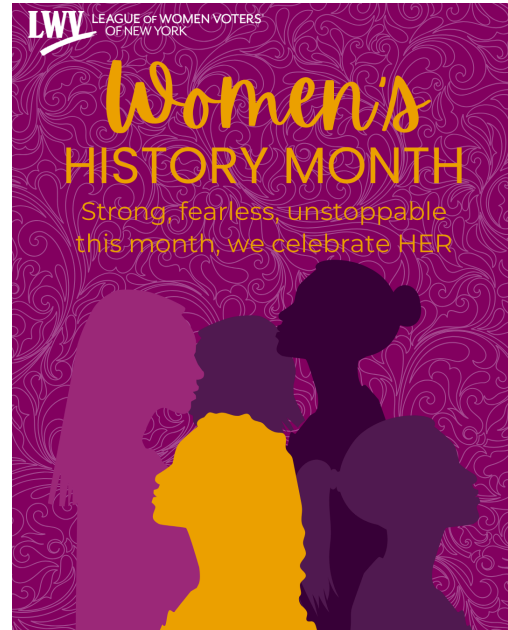
In League,
Nancy and Erica

Carrying Forward the Legacy of New York's Women Leaders

Timothy Priano

New York State has long been at the forefront of advancing women's rights and strengthening democracy. From abolition and suffrage to modern political leadership, women across the state have challenged injustice, organized communities, and expanded civic life.

The women highlighted here remind us that the rights women hold today were not automatic. They were earned through advocacy, persistence, and civic engagement and they continue to require public participation to endure.



Honoring this legacy means staying engaged in our democracy. Here's what you can do today:

- Register and vote - Confirm your voter registration and encourage participation among friends, family, and first-time voters.
- Stay informed - Follow policies affecting voting rights, reproductive freedom, economic equity, education, and workplace fairness.
- Support fair and accessible elections - Advocate for voter access, election integrity, and transparent government.
- Engage locally - Attend school board meetings, community forums, and local government sessions—where many movements begin.
- Amplify women's leadership - Share accurate information, uplift diverse voices, and encourage women to seek elected or civic leadership roles.
- Support the League of Women Voters - Engage with your local League's work educating voters, hosting candidate forums, and defending democratic principles statewide.

From Sojourner Truth and Susan B. Anthony to Harriet Tubman, Mary Talbert, Shirley Chisholm, Geraldine Ferraro, Gloria Steinem, and Governor Kathy Hochul, New York women have shaped movements that expanded rights and strengthened democracy nationwide.

Women's History Month is a time to honor the past and to recommit to participation, protect voting rights, and strengthening democracy for future generations.

LWVNYS Board Announcements

Voter Services

Jane Colvin, 2nd Vice President/ Voter Services

It's difficult not to become alarmed reading about the ICE tactics and the political news that is coming thick and fast, especially recently with what LWVUS is calling the SAVE Act suite of bills.

Did you know that if the Senate passes one of these bills voter registration as we know it will no longer be permitted? Voter registration by mail, voter registration drives, online voter registration, and automatic voter registration would be prohibited. Citizens wishing to register to vote for the first time and anyone wishing to change their registration because of a new address or enrolling in a political party would have to provide proof of citizenship...in person. That proof would have to be a passport, birth certificate, or certificate of naturalization which, according to a [survey](#) conducted by the Brennan Center and partners, would exclude tens of millions of voters who do not have access to these documents.

As League members, we don't 'do alarmed' – we do action and in many different ways: We respond to LWVUS' [calls to action](#), we write LTEs, hold educational events, post social media messages, send VAN/GetThru texts. We make use of the resources available to us, reaching out to young and old.

Helping us tap into a powerful-but-underutilized resource, LWVUS is offering a Webinar on “Amplifying Our Impact: Supporting Student-Led Voter Registration Drives” on **March 10**. You can register for the virtual meeting [here](#).

Click [here](#) to find FAQs about the SAVE Act suite of bills.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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

I hope many of you enjoyed this year's Winter Olympics — the “big air” events were a highlight for me. As the Games close, our attention turns to the LWVNYS Regional DEI trainings. There is much to discuss about diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, particularly as white supremacist strategies like “Project 2025” gain visibility.

An Olympic story offers a powerful parallel to our work. Moving beyond “I'm a nice person” and transactional partnerships requires examining the bias embedded within our own League structures. To grow, we must look honestly at how habits, traditions, and assumptions can limit our ability to become genuinely multicultural organizations shaped by different lived experiences.

Consider Surya Bonaly, the powerful, athletic, Black figure skater who faced judging bias in the 1990s. Her physique and style challenged narrow expectations of what a skater should look like. At the 1998 Nagano Games, she performed a one-footed backflip — an act of defiance against years of bias — knowing it would cost her in scoring but determined to be seen fully for her talent and identity.

A two-footed backflip had been banned since 1976; only in 2024 were the rules changed, allowing the move to return. Who decides which traditions endure? What potential is lost when rules freeze a field in time?

After the Regional DEI training, the PTR tool (Preferences–Traditions–Requirements) can help us evaluate whether our longstanding practices protect mission — or unintentionally silence new voices.

DEIA must be actionable. Let's examine ourselves now — intentionally — so we do not wait another generation to welcome the full range of talent, experience, and perspective around us.

Updates from the State League

Regional Trainings: Preparing for 2026

Join us for a regional training near you as we prepare for the 2026 election. We will discuss several topics to improve our impact and our reach in the communities we serve.

You can look forward to the below training topics:

REGIONAL TRAININGS
PREPARING FOR 2026

These training workshops deliver actionable skills you can apply within your Local League during 2026.

- Cazenovia Regional Training**
Cazenovia Presbyterian Church
28 FEBRUARY 2026 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
- New York City Regional Training**
Society for Ethical Culture
14 MARCH 2026 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
- Saratoga Springs Regional Training**
Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church
21 MARCH 2026 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
- Rochester Regional Training**
Third Presbyterian Church
11 APRIL 2026 9:15AM-3:15PM

REGISTRATION COMING SOON

- Advocating and Taking Action
- Observer Corps
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Youth Engagement/ Brand Awareness (Social Media)
- Changes to Election Law in NY and Combatting Mis & Dis Information

Register TODAY!

- New York City Regional Training- March 14, 2026
- Saratoga Springs Regional Training- March 21, 2026
- Rochester Regional Training- April 11, 2026

Women and Political Power

Join us **Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 5pm-8pm at the New York State Museum** for a conversation about women in the NYS Legislature between 1919 and 1992 with:

- Carol Faulkner, Professor of History, Syracuse University, and
- Lauren Kozakiewicz, Lecturer in History at the University of Albany, and author of **Ladies' Day at the Capitol: New York's Women Legislators, 1919-1992.**

Celebrate Women's History Month

WOMEN AND POLITICAL POWER

Thursday, March 26
5 to 8 PM

New York State Museum
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY

Join us for an evening conversation on women in the New York State Legislature (1919-1992)

Featuring Carol Faulkner, Professor in History, Syracuse University
AND
Lauren Kozakiewicz, Lecturer in History, University at Albany; author of *Ladies' Day at the Capitol: New York's Women Legislators, 1919-1992*

TICKETS \$25/PERSON
5 PM - Light Hors d'Oeuvres & Fun Mocktails
6 PM - Program Begins

Register Here by March 16
https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/KRTGZg5jJaXEe3eYmnGH3A

Or Scan QR Code

Sponsored by the Women's Rights Alliance of NYS, NYS Museum, League of Women Voters of NYS Education Foundation, and the NYS Archives Partnership Trust

How did women's participation change politics - and change women!

New York women were central to the birth of the suffrage effort and the final win in 1920. What did they do with their new power?

Schedule and Price:

- \$25 per person
- 5:00 Light hors d'oeuvres and fun mocktails
- 6:00 Program begins

Register here by March 16:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/KRTGZg5jJaXEe3eYmnGH3A


Local League Happenings

Check out these updates from our Local Leagues!

League of Women Voters of New Rochelle- On **March 5th**, at The League of Women Voters of New Rochelle and Unite NY are co-sponsoring a screening of **Majority Rules 101** at New Rochelle Public Library to inform the community about election reforms. The film is a special 30-minute cut of the documentary film, Majority Rules, that introduces audiences to election reform and sparks conversation about how more choice in our electoral process can lead to a more responsive democracy. The election reforms highlighted in the film are Ranked Choice Voting and Non-Partisan Primaries. There will be a Q&A following the film and an opportunity for discussion. For more information click [here](#).


League of Women Voters of New Castle- The League of Women Voters of New Castle is again hosting its popular women in wine event at local merchant and event partner Hilltop Wines and Spirits to celebrate IWD. More than ever, it is important to come

CELEBRATE
International Women's Day




WINE TASTING AND LIGHT BITES
FRIDAY, MARCH 13TH
5:30 - 7:30PM

HOSTED BY THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
NEW CASTLE AT



HILLTOP
WINES & SPIRITS
SERVING CHAPPAQUA THE BEST SINCE 1924



together to express solidarity for women's rights and gender equality, envisioning a world where difference is valued and celebrated. Collective action and shared ownership for driving gender parity is what makes International Women's Day impactful. Gloria Steinem, world-renowned feminist, journalist and activist reportedly once explained "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."

Friends of the League will gather on **Friday, March 13 at Hilltop Wines and Spirits at 423 King Street in Chappaqua**. Hilltop will have a knowledgeable wine representative on site who will be offering information and tasting of wines celebrating the involvement of

women in the wine industry. LWVNC Board members will be on hand from 5:30 to 7:30 with some tasty charcuterie board nibbles and information about current ways the League is taking action. As an attendance bonus, tasting items purchased by "Friends" that evening will receive a 10% discount, and a percentage of everyone's total purchase will also benefit the League, helping our work to advance the rights of women, in the spirit of this year's International Women's Day theme - #givetogain.

League of Women Voters New York City- The League of Women Voters of NYC welcomed award-winning economics and politics journalist Greg David to our Lunch with the League speaker series, where he spoke about the impact of the New York State budget on New York City's fiscal outlook. LWVNYC's Next Gen committee also hosted "Democracy & Drag Bingo" with a side of Civics Trivia for our community, hosted by local Drag Queen Linda Loves Bingo.



The League of Women Voters of Huntington- LWV Huntington is deeply engaged in registering high school students and training them in the civics of participation in our democratic system. After training members of Brentwood High's Government Club on how to conduct a voter registration effort, the club members—with help from 8 League members each day—registered and pre-registered 413 of their fellow students over a two-day period in early February. The success, according to youth committee leaders Deb Cosher and Loretta Chillemi, was based upon the strategy of "Youth Engaging Youth." The youth committee is also rolling out a new educational program, Democracy and Voting: Why & How, that they will present to all the senior classes at Amityville High School.

League of Women Voters Broome and Tioga Counties- On a cold February 11th, 25 individuals became naturalized citizens at the Northern District of NY Federal Courthouse in Binghamton. The League was there!! With 3 volunteers and one new member observing, we distributed materials. 60% completed voter registration forms that were hand delivered that same day by the League to the Broome County Board of Elections for processing. Presiding Judge Miroslav Lovric, himself a naturalized citizen, remarked that it was a "sold out" event—and it truly was. The courtroom was overflowing with new citizens, families, and supporters, making it a joyful and inspiring occasion for all who attended. We are also excited to share that our League has been awarded a 2026 New Citizens grant from the LWVUS. This funding will help us continue welcoming and assisting our newest Americans as they exercise their right to vote. We look forward to putting it to good use in the months ahead.

[Donate to LWVNYS](#)

[Donate to LWVNYS Education Foundation](#)

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League of Women Voters of New York State
1 Steuben Place
Albany, NY 12207
lwnny.org



League of Women Voters of NYS | 1 Steuben Place | Albany, NY 12207 US

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