



***STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY
CONFERENCE***

Promoting Principles of Democracy

May 17-20, 2026

League of Women Voters of New York State
Education Foundation, Inc.
The Blake, 1 Steuben Place
Albany, New York 12207
518-465-4162
www.lwvny.org

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To increase students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.
- ◆ To improve student understanding of the framework through which public policy is determined in New York State.
- ◆ To enhance student understanding of the roles of various forces seeking to impact New York State legislation and policy development, enactment and change.
- ◆ To demonstrate to the student the value of their vote.
- ◆ To promote an increased understanding of New York State's legislative process through legislative shadowing experiences.
- ◆ To promote civic participation as a lifelong process.



“The most important political office is that of the private citizen.”

Louis D. Brandeis

As an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Louis Dembitz Brandeis (1856-1941) tried to reconcile the developing powers of modern government and society with the maintenance of individual liberties and opportunities for personal development.



SUNDAY, May 17

TIME	ACTIVITY
2:00-5:00	Registration/Hotel Room Assignments
5:30-6:00	Welcome and Agenda Overview <i>Erica Smitka, Executive Director</i> <i>League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS)</i>
6:15	Dinner
7:00 – 7:30	Ice Breaker
7:30-8:30	How Does New York State Government Work? <i>Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Executive Director</i>
8:30 – 10:00	Hospitality Room
10:00	BED CHECK

MONDAY, May 18

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:00-8:30	Breakfast in the Lobby
8:30	Meet in Hotel Lobby

9:00-10:00	Tour of NYS Capitol (Split group Tour of NYS Plaza)
10:00-11:00	Tour of NYS Capitol (Split group Tour of NYS Plaza)
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:30-1:15	Tips for Being a Successful Citizen Lobbyist <i>Erica Smitka, Executive Director, LWVNYS</i> <i>With Special Guests:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assemblymember John McDonald III</i>
1:30	Meet by Front Doors of Hotel; Walk to Capitol
2:00–5:00	SHADOW ASSEMBLY
6:15-7:00	Dinner and Speaker
7:00-8:30	Media Discussion <i>Xavia Francis, Program and Office Coordinator, LWVNYS</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emma Quinn, CBS6 News</i> • <i>Aaron Shellow-Lavine, Southern Adirondack Bureau Chief, WAMC</i> • <i>Andrea Cunliffe, Sanctuary for Independent Media</i>
8:30 – 10:00	Hospitality Room
10:00	BED CHECK

TUESDAY, May 19

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:00-8:45	Breakfast in the Lobby
9:00 – 10:00	Political Activism: How Citizens Make a Difference <i>Brendan Cushing</i> <i>Generation Vote, Director</i>
10:15-11:15	Political Activism (continued) <i>Kayla Mumtaz</i>

*Alliance for Quality Education, Legislative Affairs and Community
Engagement Specialist*

11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:40	Break
12:45-1:30	Executive Roles in the City <i>Liz Mariapen</i> <i>Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, City of Albany</i>
1:30	Meet by Front Doors of Hotel; Walk to Capitol
2:00 – 4:00	SHADOW SENATE
4:00-4:30	Central Staff: Insight from a Former SIA Student <i>Leah Goldman</i> <i>Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, NYS Senate</i>
5:15	Meet at the North End of the Concourse
6:15 – 7:00	Dinner
7:00-8:30	Running for Office <i>Xavia Francis, Program and Office Coordinator, LWVNYS</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Sam Fein, Albany City Chief Auditor</i>• <i>Rachel Powell, City of Albany Common Council, 12th Ward</i>• <i>Susan Pedo, Albany County Legislator, District 5</i>
8:35	Meet in Hotel Lobby
9:00-10:30	Bowling
11:00	BED CHECK

WEDNESDAY, May 20

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30	BREAKFAST ROOM <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring Suitcase to the Meeting Room
9:00-10:00	How Does NYS Government Work---Final Question and Answer

Period

10:00-10:30

Voter Registration

Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Executive Director

10:30-11:15

Recognition Ceremony

11:30

Boxed Lunch



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League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc.
NYS United Teachers (NYSUT)
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