

STATE VOTER

Democracy Needs Our Vote Now More than Ever June 2026

Midterms are more than just another election cycle, they are an opportunity for citizens to stand up for the issues that matter most, hold leaders accountable, and strengthen the foundation of democracy. Every vote represents a voice, a perspective, and a commitment to the future of our neighborhoods, schools, economy, and nation. This season serves as a reminder that civic participation is not only a right, but a responsibility, and encouraging one another to vote helps ensure that every community has a seat at the table.



State Leaders Message

Nancy Rosenthal, President,
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Erica Smitka, Executive Director, erica@lwwny.org

What better way to begin June than with the words of a student reflecting on her experience shortly after returning home from the Students Inside Albany (SIA) program.

Raine, a student from LWV Larchmont-Mamaroneck, reminds us why we do this work each and every day and the lasting impact SIA has on the students we bring to Albany:

“The Students Inside Albany Program was an extremely transformative experience in my understanding of what it means to be a citizen, participate in democracy, and engage directly with the government. Through presentations, panels, tours, and opportunities to shadow individuals working in New York State government, the program offered insight into both the visible and often-overlooked realities of policymaking. I was surrounded by role models who were eager to teach, answer questions, and open their work and experiences to inquiry. Over the three days, I developed a stronger understanding of the various forces that influence legislation and affect change, as well as the responsibilities that accompany representative government.”

Thank you to LWVNY staff, the many volunteers and League members, and our elected officials who helped make this another successful SIA experience!

A few thoughts to ponder as we continue collaborating with organizations and communities to Get Out the Vote (GOTV). On a call this week with social justice advocate Loretta Ross, she spoke about the difference between perfect and

imperfect activism. She reminded us that every cause we care about depends on strategic unity, not perfect alignment. If we prioritize being right over being effective, we risk contributing to the very divide-and-conquer tactics we see growing around us. We must stop expecting perfect activists. The question becomes: do we want perfect action or perfect inaction? As we move toward the general election in November, may we bring not only passion, but compassion, to this work together. Perhaps even a little radical love alongside radical politics.



Thank you for everything you do, each and every day, to defend democracy. Your leadership and commitment remind us all that voters, not politicians, should shape the future of our democracy.

In League,
Nancy and Erica

LWVNYS Board Announcements

Voter Services

Jane Colvin, 2nd Vice President/ Voter Services

The number of programs, resources, and activities to help us GOTV and ensure a safe and secure election are coming at a dizzying pace. Here are just a few of the excellent resources that National and State are offering:

- LWVVUS Unite & Rise 8.5 PowerPlaybook 5 with detailed Day of Action Low, Medium, and High plans and activities focusing on collaborations to reach under resourced communities, outside of the League universe. Over 10 comprehensive ways to participate. To learn more, click [here](#).
- LWVNY's invitation to participate in the Election Protection program co-led by Common Cause and the NAACP, comprised of more than 100 local, state and national partners to ensure eligible voters can cast their ballots and know they are counted. There are "Hands Off Our Vote" training sessions. See more below.
- LWVNY's VAN Workshops to learn how your League can best use VAN to target voters for Get Out the Vote efforts this election cycle. Another to be scheduled soon.

It's clear (from our VS Surveys) that your GOTV and educational activities are already keeping you busy during this primary season and yet there's more, always more for you to choose from. It can be dizzying, but fortunately, despite all the great ideas, you alone can decide what makes sense for your League. And after all, it's not necessary to start something new – collaborate with partnerships you already have like the NAACP, religious institutions, civic organizations; use those reliable tools you already have like your palm cards and doorhangers to help potential voters decide and plan to vote; and continue to do VR tables, now at graduation ceremonies.

Finally, it also works to keep it focused and direct. As CEO Celina Stewart recently recommended in her speech at at the 18th Annual Brown Forum for Women in the Law Conference at Northeastern University School of Law:

"Reach five people. Help them make a plan to vote. That's how movements grow. That's how democracy survives."

Thank you all for what you do and keep up the good work!

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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

How are we all doing with practicing the [“PTR” technique \(Practices/ Traditions/ Requirements\)](#) to enhance inclusivity within our Local Leagues?

While each of you can only truly speak for yourself, you can likely sense whether the climate in your League meetings and communications tends to invite questions and open dialogue, or whether it leans toward directives with little room for discussion. This framework aims to help us challenge long standing traditions and practices and open the door for us to make changes that will ultimately make us a more inclusive organization.

After presenting this framework tool to Leagues at Regional Trainings, I am unfortunately still not seeing a clear discussion of alternatives take place. Additionally, there has been feedback that indicated that “PTR” will be used on special occasions, like retreats or BOD meetings.

This is why I'm asking about practice. PTR is a new skill for most people, and saving it for specific moments won't build the muscle memory you need for when it matters most. And when does it matter? Essentially every day.

Getting well versed on using “PTR” allows you to gain the best from all your members. It can also be used with family and friends. And in this moment, when we should be living up to the promise of a true democracy that includes all voices, yet find ourselves moving away from that goal at the national level, we need to practice actively listening for the ideas that can make us all better.

See below for more info on our next DEIA Meeting!

Updates from the State League

Students Inside Albany 2026 was a success!

The League of Women Voters New York State would like to give all the participating students of Students Inside Albany a special shout out for joining us to explore how NYS government works. Having the opportunity to shadow their NYS representatives and explore careers within the political field, students took full advantage of this opportunity to connect with professionals as well as their peers with similar interests. A special thanks to all of our local leagues for your efforts during the selection process and bringing such bright minds to Albany!



Be sure to visit us on social media to view additional pictures from the program and be on the lookout for a full summary of Students Inside Albany 2026.

We look forward to having our next cohort joining us inside Albany in 2027.

VAN/GOTV with Monica Ferguson

The webinar on **Using VAN to GOTV in the 2026 Election** with Monica Ferguson (LWVNYS VAN Chair) was an excellent demonstration of how to best use this valuable tool to increase voter turnout, particularly in communities where turnout numbers are historically low.

The recording may be viewed [here](#). Please reach out with any VAN questions to Monica, our LWVNYS VAN Chair, at lwwny-van@gmail.com.

Hands Off Our Vote: Election Protection

This fall we invite our members to join us in participating in the Election Protection program co-led by Common Cause and the NAACP. This effort is comprised of more than 100 local, state and national partners and will work throughout the primary and general election to ensure eligible voters can cast their ballots and know they are counted. Sign up [here](#) for more information.

LWVNYS Council 2026: June 15, 2026

LWVNYS Council is around the corner. To ensure you are prepared please view the 2026 Council Toolkit [here](#) for more details. All presidents have been notified of how many delegates they are allowed to send.

LWV Convention 2026
What to Know Before You Go
Tues, June 2 @ 7:30pm NY
6:30 IL, 5:30 CO, 4:30 OR

LWV PWM/NYS Plus
Why do 80+ Leagues support Updating the Privatization Position to make it usable.

LWV Colorado Plus
Why do we need a Religious Freedom Position (Many Leagues)

LWV Oregon Plus
Why propose a Resolution when we've already agreed on electing Presidents by Popular Vote. (Many Leagues)

LWV Athens Ohio Plus
Why propose a Study on Money. How could it help us save democracy. (Many Leagues)

ONE PERSON ONE VOTE

The MONEY SYSTEM

Register for Webinar

Get the Facts Before You Vote
Open to Members Designed for Delegates

LWVUS Convention: Non-Recommended Program Webinar

Join us on June 2, for the LWVUS Convention: Non-Recommended Program Webinar. This is a pre-convention briefing on non-recommended concurrences, resolution, study proposals. The link to register is [here](#).

This webinar is open to members and designed to prepare delegates before voting. This webinar will be hosted at 7:30pm via zoom.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Committee Meeting

This Thursday the DEI Committee will be hosting their monthly committee meeting. League Members are encouraged to attend. Click [here](#) to join the meeting via zoom on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 5:30pm-6:30pm.

Advocacy Efforts

We've been really busy as session is winding down. Make sure you get all of our advocacy updates by signing up for the Legislative Updates [here](#).

Regional Training Re-Cap

Regional Trainings in the Spring? Check out the PowerPoints and resources on our website [here](#). The trainings covered:

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

Local League Happenings

Check out these updates from our Local Leagues!

The League of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island & North Fork- The League held our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 17. They featured speaker, Dr. Andrea Goldsmith, the new president of Stony Brook University, the top public university in NYS, gave an incredibly amazing, informative speech about their mission and aspirational goals; the programs on the Southampton campus; and their new Future Scholars program with 100 students each year in five local school districts.

On Thursday, **June 4**, the league is having a 250th anniversary fundraising tour of Southampton. The tour will consist of a talk at Southampton Arts Center's 250th exhibit from the Museum of Democracy, talking with the WLIW-FM radio station (the only NPR station on Long Island), a lunch meeting at the Southampton Inn with the owner; and a discussion at the new Southampton Playhouse.

Monday, **June 8**, 7-8 p.m. is the virtual debate on SEA-TV for the two candidates running in the June 23 Democratic primary for the 1st Congressional District.

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown- The geography notwithstanding, the League of Women Voters of Albany County and the League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area will hold a candidates' debate for the 102nd NY Assembly District contest in advance of the June 23rd Primary. The debate will be **Thursday, June 4, 2026**, at the Bouck Hall Theater at The State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill, 106 Suffolk Cir, Cobleskill, NY 12043 from 7-9pm.

Vying to be the Democratic Party candidate in the November election are Thomas Boomhower, Mary T. Finneran, and Janet S. Tweed. All three candidates have agreed to debate. The 102nd Assembly district contains all of Greene and Schoharie Counties; parts of Albany County, Delaware County, and Otsego County.

Deb Liebman, Voter Services Chair, along with MaryKate Owens and Chris Deys from the Albany League have partnered with Maureen Murray, Voter Services Chair of the Cooperstown League and shared the work of organizing the venue, inviting the candidates, submitting the press release, etc. These two Leagues collaborated two years ago as well for a pre-primary event for the same Assembly District.

The League is also holding a commemorative event with a Susan B Anthony re-enactment on **Saturday, June 27th**. This event will honor the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and to promote and support democracy and right to vote for all. To read more about the event click [here](#).

League of Women Voters of New York City-

In May, the New York City League of Women Voters hosted the 9 primary candidates for New York's Congressional District 12 at our final Lunch with the League of the season. In attendance were Alex Bores, George Conway, Christopher Diep, Laura Dunn, Micah Lasher, Jack Schlossberg, Nina Schwalbe, Caroline Shinkle, and Patrick Timmins. Each candidate gave a brief introduction, followed by questions from the audience.



LWVNYC also kicked off the vote phase for the People's Money, New York City's citywide participatory budgeting initiative. Through **June 21**, LWVNYC will be helping New Yorkers around the city decide how to spend \$4 million of the city budget on community-proposed projects in their borough.

Rigodis Appling, LWVNYC member, Chair of the Vote in NYC Jails coalition, and Chair of the LWV NY State Criminal Justice Committee, was

honored with a New York City Bar Legal Services Award. The Legal Services Awards were established to recognize the efforts of lawyers and non-lawyers who

have directly provided free legal services to disenfranchised clients or communities on a full-time basis for an extended period of time.

League of Women Voters Suffolk County ILO- In partnership with 4 local Leagues (Huntington, Smithtown, Brookhaven and the Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork) they presented a combined hour- long zoom for the Long Island Library Resource Council on April 23: "LVW: Sharing Our History, Defending Democracy, and Educating Voters Nationally, Statewide, and Locally"

It will be available statewide for library professionals to better familiarize themselves about the League.

U.S. Corner

2026 LWVUS National Convention Update

The 2026 LWVUS National Convention will take place **June 25–28, 2026**, in Columbus, Ohio! Erica and Nancy will happily help guide delegates on the convention floor, but please take time now to review the Convention agenda and delegate resources available on the [Convention website](#).

More importantly, especially for first-time delegates, beginning June 1 there will be regular training sessions offered to help attendees prepare for Convention. Even as seasoned attendees, Erica and Nancy will be participating in these training sessions, so we arrive ready to engage fully rather than trying to learn rules and procedures on the spot.

The first session, [2026 Convention Rules and Parliamentary Procedure](#), will be held virtually on June 1 from 5:00–6:00 PM ET and led by Convention Parliamentarian Margaret-Ann Howie. This webinar is for registered 2026 Convention attendees and will cover foundational concepts from Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, including motions, debate, points of order, and how Convention rules are applied. Future sessions may be found on the events calendar page within the [League Management Site \(LMS\)](#).

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