

STATE VOTER

Empowering Every Voice: Building a Stronger Voter Community May 2026

In the months ahead, our efforts sharing trusted, nonpartisan information, expanding voter registration, and engaging neighbors in meaningful, uplifting conversations will lay the groundwork for a season of impact and progress. By approaching this work with energy, optimism, and a shared sense of purpose, we not only empower more people to make their voices heard but also build toward a rewarding season where our collective dedication gives way to reflection, renewal, and well-earned moments of connection and relaxation.



State Leaders Message

Nancy Rosenthal, President,

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We hope everyone is savoring the daffodils, tulips, and hyacinths emerging after our long winter. We are hard at work at the State Capitol advocating for critical election reform measures and before we know it, it will be the June primary.

Then we'll be gearing up for Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts ahead of the November midterm elections.

Our work is significant—and essential. If we want to protect and strengthen our democracy, we must commit fully to GOTV. The midterm elections must reflect the voices and will of the people.

We will be reading and hearing much in the coming days, and years, about the Supreme Court's decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* and its implications for Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. At its core, though, this decision is a call to action for everyone who cares about our democracy: we must do everything we can to ensure people vote. One thing we know about gerrymandering is that high voter turnout can blunt its impact. Voter turnout is foundational to the work of the League—and it is something we do well. That is the key takeaway for today. Take a look at the [statement](#) from LWVUS on this decision.

[Power Playbook #5: People Power Summer](#), the next phase of Unite & Rise 8.5, has just been released by LWVUS. Read more about it from Jane, Vice President of Voter Service, below!

The SAVE Act is no longer pending in the Senate. Thank you for your calls, letters, outreach, and education efforts—your work made a difference. While the bill could return, for now, this is a meaningful victory for voters everywhere, and it's worth celebrating.

On May 14 at 4:00 PM EST, LWVUS will host [LWV DEI Foundations](#). We strongly encourage everyone to register for this important session, which will help build a shared understanding of key Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion concepts, particularly around racial equity. Our hope is that every member in the state participates. We have made progress, thanks in large part to Regina Tillman, our Vice President of DEI—but there is always more to learn and more work to do.



League members continue, in countless ways, to advocate for voters and strengthen democracy in our communities.

The impact you make is real and lasting. This work is not always easy, but it is vital. As we head into annual meeting season in May and June, we encourage you to take time for self-care and to reconnect with one another. Being in community with fellow League members can help restore energy and renew purpose.

In League,
Nancy and Erica

LWVNYS Board Announcements

Voter Services

Jane Colvin, 2nd Vice President/ Voter Services

As the weeks slip by, I am feeling increasing anxiety about the primaries and mid-term elections: how can we ensure safe, secure and accessible elections in this chaotic environment? As an antidote, I find myself mustering the much-parodied British slogan "Stay Calm and Carry On" and the Scout motto: "Be Prepared". I find that both help enormously and recommend them to you – as League members for whom "Carrying On" is a synonym for taking action and "Being Prepared" is second nature. Here are at least two great resources that will help ensure both:

LWVUS Unite & Rise 8.5 Million – [Power Playbook #5: People Power Summer](#) has just been released and it is a POWERHOUSE!!! This playbook centers on a nationwide **Day of Action on August 8** and asks every League to organize a civic action to mark the anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, signed into law on August 6, 1965. To encourage participation, it provides everything: from menus of different possible actions to all the necessary tools, timelines, and strategies to help Leagues take action and deepen their impact in their communities. On Monday, May 4, 5pm there is a training webinar: [Introduction to Playbook 5 and the August 8 Day of Action](#). I urge you to watch it!!

The League Management Site (LMS) provides information, templates, and how-to materials on almost every aspect of voter service. Just recently, the LWVUS announced a nation-wide collaboration with The Civics Center to promote voter registration in US high schools. Here's the [link to the toolkit](#) they've developed with the tools, step-by-step guidance, and resources to support student-led VR drives in high schools.

Dianna Wynn's biweekly **League Update** also provides a list of webinars and virtual meetings on similar informative and timely topics.

Hands Off Our Vote is a statewide effort coordinated by the League, Common Cause, NAACP, and other partners across the state to mobilize and equip communities to actively protect voters. Volunteers, partners, and coalition members will be trained to:

- Provide accurate, real-time information to voters
- Respond to intimidation, federal interference, misinformation, and administrative barriers
- Support voters in navigating election procedures with confidence
- Ensure no voter is turned away or discouraged from participating

LWVNYS Staff recently sent out a [Survey](#) to gauge interest, and I hope you will join the program!!

Join in!!! Take Action!!! You'll feel A LOT better for it.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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

A recent lawsuit in [Pasadena, CA](#) around a study to improve maternal health outcomes for Black women and their children brought up the importance of emphasizing equity over equality. The suit was filed by a white woman who claimed racial discrimination after she was turned away from the project's clinic for not meeting the criteria for acceptance, which were primarily race-based.

When working on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Access, the concept of equity is the hardest to grasp. The aforementioned situation makes equity more concrete. Fairness is the bottom line with equity; however, it is often confused with equality.

Those who recall previous presentations on the subject may remember being shown a series of cartoon images of boys looking over a fence at a baseball game. Equality is illustrated by giving each boy the same size box, regardless of his individual circumstances, even the boy who doesn't need one still receives a box. This is a "one size fits all" approach.

Equity, then, is demonstrated as the real solution to the disparities between the boys, in this case, differences in height. These disparities are not within the control of any of the boys (whether due to age or being a wheelchair user). Different size boxes, which we can think of as allocated resources, address those inherent disparities. Thus, equity can lead to equality, in this case, all the boys being able to equally watch the baseball game. This is still not the ultimate step toward achieving parity, but it begins to give each boy a fair chance once the initial inadequacy in resource distribution is addressed.

Addressing researched gaps in outcomes, such as morbidity and mortality, is a matter of identifying root causes and then directing resources to close those gaps. That is what is fair. It is similar to a ramp built for the boy in a wheelchair so he can watch the game, the other boys do not benefit from that ramp, which is precisely the point. Sameness is not always helpful. I can only hope that in understanding equity, our League members remember that sameness is not always the desired solution, but fairness can be. Without that understanding, the Black Maternal Health Program may lose its support, and lives will continue to be lost.

Recommended: If you are still unsure about equity, please take a moment to look it up and learn more about why this concept matters. Then, share what you have learned with your fellow League members so that uninformed resistance to equitable solutions can begin to decline.

Updates from the State League

Students Inside Albany 2026

Our highly anticipated Students Inside Albany Conference is right around the corner, starting May 17th- May 20th. With the help of our local leagues, we have admitted 60 brilliant students to participate this year!

We will be hosting a virtual **Student- Parent Orientation** for our students and their families along with SIA coordinators on **May 6th at 6pm**. This orientation will allow families to ask any questions and for students to connect prior. We ask that all SIA Coordinators connect with your students and their families to make sure they are registered for the Student-Parent orientation!

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 of Women Voters of the Hamptons, Shelter Island & North Fork will be having its Annual Meeting on **Sunday, May 17, 2-4 p.m.** at Southampton's Rogers Memorial Library. Before the business portion of the meeting, our featured speaker will be Dr. Andrea Goldsmith, the new president of Stony Brook University, who will speak about programs at the Stony Brook Southampton University campus and also their new "Future Scholars" program with five local school districts.

In June, we've scheduled three virtual primary debates—for 1st Senate District candidates on June 1 on SEA-TV, for 1st Congressional District candidates on June 8 on SEA-TV, and for Town of East Hampton Supervisor candidates on June 3 on LTV.

League of Women Voters of Syracuse Metro Area- On April 13, LWV of Syracuse partnered with the Matilda Joslyn Gage Center to host author Lindsey Cormack for an in-person talk about her book, "How to Raise a Citizen (And why it's up to you to do it)". She is a terrific speaker, and questions went on for a full 45 minutes after her presentation. They were able to record this event, and it is up on our YouTube.

The Syracuse Metro Area League is continuing to do Voter Registration twice a month at the Judicial Naturalization Ceremonies here in Syracuse. We are also gearing up for the VR and education we do in the Syracuse City High Schools each spring.

In taking advantage of the LWVUS partnership with LUSH Cosmetics, we will be holding a tabling event at the LUSH store in Destiny Mall on **May 23rd**. When we did this last fall it was very successful, and working with the staff at LUSH is a wonderful experience.

The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown- The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown area is excited to announce an upcoming program: author Elaine Weiss will be discussing her most recent award-winning book, *Spell Freedom: The Underground Schools That Built the Civil Rights Movement*. The event will be a conversation with LWVCA board member, historian Gretchen Sorin, Director of SUNY's Cooperstown Graduate Program. Gretchen is also the author of *Driving While Black*, and co-directed the film *Driving While Black* with Ric Burns.

Many League members will remember Elaine Weiss, who is also the author of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight To Win The Vote*, about the Suffragists. She spoke at numerous state leagues--including ours--and also at LWVUS when that book was published.

The event is free and open to the public, and over a dozen local organizations are cosponsoring it. Guests from other leagues are welcome to join us for what promises to be an interesting and inspiring event. **Thursday, May 28, 7 pm in the Village Ballroom at Village Hall, 22 Main St., Cooperstown.** <https://elaineweiss.com/>

League of Women Voters Utica Rome Metro Area- The League of Women Voters (LWV) Utica-Rome Metro was awarded a grant from LWV National to engage prospective young voters and under-represented communities in taking part in the political process through civic education and engagement. As an initial step they wanted a slogan that might resonate with the audience and promote the mission. A young lady from New Hartford, NY was asked her opinion and after some thought came up with the slogan, "You have a voice. Use it – Vote!" Bristol Jasiewicz, a sophomore and student

newspaper editor, was that young lady. Her slogan is being used for bracelets which are given to students who participate in discussion groups or register to vote. It is also on postcards that will be sent as reminders to vote in the upcoming general election in November 2026. Bristol attended the general membership meeting on March 28, 2026 to be recognized and given her own bracelets and postcard. She also registered to vote with her mom, Amanda Humphrey, looking on!



League of Women Voters North Country- The League of Women Voters of the North Country was honored to host, in partnership with the Peru Central School, the Meet Your State and Local Legislators (MYSLL) Symposium.

The MYSLL Symposium, provided a unique platform for students, educators, and the community to learn firsthand about state and local government in New York. They heard from several local and state government officials who shared valuable insights into leadership, public service, and the importance of representing the people and the North Country.



League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara- On April 11th, members of LWV Buffalo/Niagara filled half the seats at the Rochester training session put on by our New York State League. LWVBN Member Timothy Priano presented to the group.

LWV for Buffalo/Niagara was honored on April 29th by the Bar Association of Erie County when they presented them with their Liberty Bell Award for 2026.

League of Women Voters of New York City- In April, the League of Women Voters of New York City was thrilled to host New York City Comptroller Mark Levine at their monthly speaker series, Lunch with the League, where he discussed the city's budget crisis. LWNVNYC also co-hosted a screening of "Steal This Story, Please!", the award-winning documentary about journalist and host of Democracy Now!, Amy Goodman. Volunteers registered voters and participated in a Q+A moderated by WNYC Host Alison Stewart with the directors of the film and Amy Goodman herself. Co-President Kai Rosenthal spoke at a Vote in NYC Jails Coalition rally in advance of a City Council joint Committee hearing on voting access at Rikers.



Beginning in April and every Friday going forward, LWNVNYC is joining the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Hispanic Federation, and Dominicanos to offer voter registration at the Southern District Court in Lower Manhattan every Friday immediately following the Naturalization Ceremony.

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