



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK

STATE VOTER

Looking Ahead with a Purpose

August 2026

As summer continues, we hope you are finding time to relax, recharge, and enjoy the season. We wish you a wonderful rest of the summer and thank you for your continued commitment to strengthening our communities through civic education and engagement. Together, we look forward to building on that dedication in the months ahead as we continue empowering voters and promoting informed participation in our democracy.



State Leaders Message

Nancy Rosenthal, President,

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Erica Smitka, Executive Director, erica@lwvny.org

As League members, we find ourselves at an important moment. The months leading up to the midterm elections will require dedication, energy, and persistence. Through Unite and Rise, our Voter Service work, Election Protection, and our other democracy initiatives, we have an opportunity to educate voters, encourage participation, and strengthen our communities.

We want to thank everyone who has already committed to participating in our upcoming Democracy Under Siege meetings in the lead up to the November election. They remind us of the teamwork and determination we demonstrated in New York during the successful 2024 campaign to pass Proposition 1, the Equal Rights Amendment. When League members work together with focus and purpose, we can accomplish remarkable things.

We also know that many of us are tired. We hope July and August provide opportunities to rest, recharge, and spend time with family and friends. The work ahead will require all of us, and caring for ourselves is part of preparing for that work.

History reminds us that democracy has always depended on ordinary people choosing to do extraordinary things. Our responsibility is not to make history alone, but to do our part. Together, through steady effort, thoughtful engagement, and a shared commitment to the League's mission, we can help ensure that every eligible voter has the opportunity to participate and that our democracy remains strong.



In other news, we are excited to announce that our 2027 State Convention will be held June 18-20 at the Desmond in Albany, NY. More information coming soon and we hope to see you there!

In League,

LWVNYS Board Announcements

Jane Colvin, Vice President, Voter Services

Several weeks ago, we were thrilled to announce our victory in the Department of Justice case seeking sensitive voter data from the NYS Board of Elections. The DOJ has since appealed that decision, but the State League and our partners at the Brennan Center and the Campaign Legal Center are prepared to respond. We'll keep you updated as the case progresses. The National League has also been involved in several cases challenging the executive order restricting mail-in voting.

All of the work that LWVNYS and LWVUS are doing in the courts is supported by what you all are doing on the ground—they don't call it grassroots for nothing! Thank you to all the Leagues participating in the Unite & Rise Day of Action on August 8, the Leagues that have joined the State League's Election Protection program, those that have created an Observer Corps, and the Leagues sending members to participate in the Democracy Under Siege program. If you're not sure whether your League is involved, reach out to your local League President or Voter Service Chair to see how you can get involved. We are strongest when we are united in action to defend and strengthen our democracy.

Here are a few key dates to keep in mind as we head into election season:

- **National Voter Registration Day:** September 15, 2026
- **Disability Voting Rights Week:** September 14–18, 2026
- **Voter Education Week:** October 5–9, 2026
- **Election Hero Day:** October 20, 2026
- **Vote Early Day:** October 24, 2026 (also the last day to register to vote in New York State)
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Lastly, with the recent court cases and executive orders, it's critical to remind voters that, at this point, the only significant change affecting our upcoming election is that voters who plan to vote by mail should submit their ballots early because of slower USPS processing. Otherwise, there are no changes to how New Yorkers will cast their ballots in November. Keep up the great work!

Updates from the State League

2026 Voter Guides

As election season rapidly approaches, it is our shared responsibility to ensure that voters are well informed and prepared to participate in the democratic process.

2026 Voter Guide, Part 1 is still available for purchase. If your local League has not yet placed an order, please complete the [purchase request form](#) to reserve your copies. Part 2 of the 2026 Voter Guide will be available in September, so stay tuned for additional information.

Make a Plan to Vote Cards

Check out our new make a plan to vote cards for the 2026 Election [here](#)! These will soon be available and sent out to local Leagues to be used as a flyer to get out the vote this November.

Observer Corps

Join us for our next Statewide Observer Corps meeting on August 27, 2026. These meetings will focus on helping you and your local League to grow your Observer Corps as well to share efforts and observations from across the State. This is a recurring meeting on the last Thursday of the month via zoom. Register [here](#).

VAN/GOTV with Monica Ferguson

Join the State League and our VAN Chair, Monica Ferguson, to learn how you and your League can best use VAN to target voters for Get Out the Vote efforts this election cycle.

Thank you for joining us during our July training sessions. Together, we explored how to submit a FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) request, how to integrate that information into VAN to support Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts, and Part One of our scriptwriting training focused on effective conversations for every type of campaign outreach. If you were unable to attend, recordings of both sessions, along with the accompanying materials, are now available in our [Google Drive](#).

On **August 5 at 6pm**, continue building your skills in "Part 2: Scriptwriting for Door-to-Door Canvassing", where we'll cover how to develop and use scripts in MiniVAN for successful face-to-face voter engagement. Whether you're new to outreach or looking to refine your approach, these sessions will provide practical tools you can put to use right away.

Please reach out with any VAN questions to Monica, our LWVNYS VAN Chair, at lwny-van@gmail.com.

[Register Here](#)

Election Protection Taskforce

Join the League and our partners to create an Election Protection Taskforce during this election season. We are recruiting volunteers across New York State in partnership with the NAACP and Common Cause to support nonpartisan election observation efforts. Volunteers will serve within their own counties, helping to observe polling locations during early voting and on Election Day.

Volunteers will have multiple training opportunities and use a standardized observation checklist to document polling place conditions, such as accessibility, wait times, and other aspects of the voting experience. The observation process does not include reviewing or verifying vote counts or voter totals.

Please fill out this [google form](#) to indicate your interest in volunteering. Join us for an information session and find out more about participating in the taskforce on **August 12 at 6pm**! Register for that information session below.

[Register Here](#)

Local League Happenings

Check out these updates from our Local Leagues!

The League of Women Voters of the Cattaraugus/Allegany- LWV

Cattaraugus/Allegany will be hosting an event empowering voters and celebrating the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on **August 8th**. They will be partnering with one of their local disability advocacy groups bringing awareness of potential barriers to voting and resources to counteract. The program is suitable for everyone who is a new or even established voter. [Click here](#) for more information.

**YOUR VOTE,
YOUR VOICE,
OUR FUTURE.**

Vote November 3rd

Visit Vote411.org to find your poll site, register to vote, and find out what's on your ballot.

VOTE 411



Vote411.org

The League of Women Voter New York City-

In July, the New York City League joined thousands of New Yorkers to honor the fighting spirit of John Lewis at the second Good Trouble Lives On Rally. Members and volunteers gathered in the office to make posters before heading downtown together to join the march.



The 2026 LWVNYC summer interns worked together to create a Community Democracy Quilt. Community members were asked to design a quilt square that answers the question: "What does Democracy mean to you?" With donated materials from FabScrap, League volunteers gathered at Grace Church to decorate squares. The final quilt will be displayed in the League office.

The League of Women Voters Syracuse Metro Area- LWV Syracuse will be doing Voter Registration at two Naturalization Ceremonies in August.

In recognition of the August 8th Day of Action, LWV Syracuse will be doing Voter Registration and Education in collaboration with three churches doing two different food distribution events downtown.

Their Observer Corps is continuing to develop and now has five people covering several local monthly meetings, including the Onondaga County Legislature sessions, the Syracuse Common Council, Citizen Review Board, and Industrial Development Agency. Summaries are being written from the report forms filled out during the observations, and that information will be disseminated on their website or blog, soon.

The League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns-The League of Women Voters of the Rivertowns (LWVR) has presented its first-ever Civic Leadership Award to Sharon Courtney, executive director for social studies education for the Yonkers Public Schools, in recognition of her outstanding commitment to civic education and voter engagement. Since joining the district in 2024, Courtney has transformed the League's voter registration efforts by expanding participation across all eight Yonkers high schools. She helped distribute First Vote materials to every junior and senior, coordinated school-wide registration events, and inspired teachers and students to make the drives engaging through creative displays, bulletin boards, and even custom T-shirts featuring QR codes for voter registration. That first year alone, more than 1,000 Yonkers students registered to vote through the partnership.

Courtney has continued to strengthen the collaboration with LWVR by bringing voter registration to back-to-school nights, encouraging student government participation, and partnering with the League on a 2026 student video project promoting the importance of voting. Fourteen student-created videos were submitted, including one by fourth graders, with five selected to be featured on the League's YouTube channel and social media. A lifelong educator in New York since 1994, Courtney holds degrees from Howard University, Brooklyn College, and Mercy University, and has earned national recognition for her work teaching AP African American Studies, as well as the Blazing Torch Award for Outstanding Educators.

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