



The League of Women Voters of New York State
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

State Board Updates **January 2018**

Local League To Do's (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- **Update the LWVUS database with any changes to your membership by January 31;** the members listed as active members in the LWVUS database on Jan. 31 will be used to calculate the PMP your League will owe in July 2018 (more info, links to helpful hints, etc, below).
- Complete and return the 2018 Legislative Priorities form by **January 31**
- Schedule membership meeting before **Feb. 15** to discuss state Update and Concurrence (see info below)
- Advertise our State Advocacy Training/Lobby Day (**April 24th in Albany**); online registration at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/i_ELcAUOhYyrY6YYjXYp0g
- Reserve your hotel room NOW for **LWVUS Convention** in Chicago; check out other details at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention/convention-2018>. See how many delegates your League gets in article below.
- Send a copy of your local League bylaws and current budget to the state League office (mail, email or fax is fine) – thanks to those who have already done this.

President's Report: Dare Thompson, darethompson@gmail.com

In real estate the mantra may be “Location, location, location,” but for the League and for most organizations, nonprofit or otherwise, it’s “relationships, relationships, relationships.” Whether you need to get a bill passed (or blocked), recruit or retain members, raise money, or simply re-energize your inner Concerned Citizen, you definitely won’t get far without building relationships.

You know this. You’ve probably learned the hard way that a written request often needs a phone call follow-up, a gift of time or money is less likely to be repeated without a personalized thank you, a member will find it easier to fade away when s/he’s never personally engaged in at least some form.

That’s why even in the midst of stress over dysfunctional government here and in DC, I feel buoyed by a very lively state board, assorted happy conversations with local League members here at home and across the state, and state League staff that “fights above its weight” even when its ranks are temporarily down.

Even when things are crazy, when a local League member calls, the office makes you a priority. We were all so worried about the loss of Barb Bartoletti’s connections and quotability at the Capitol, but just as Barb predicted, “Jennifer is ready,” and it’s exciting to see Jennifer come into her own in the Legislature and among the press and advocacy groups. She is building on Barbara’s training and relationships and growing her own. We are hearing from many of you that you also feel more connected than ever to your state government thanks to her regular updates to the field. Relationships!

Meanwhile a new state board member, Betty Ann King (LWV North Country), has reached out to all of you who are interested in sharing ideas about ways to engage young people and build the voters of the future. Another new member, Suzanne Stassevitch (LWV NYC), is helping figure out ways to make our electronic communications (websites, social media, etc) more effective. And both joined our recent conversation with our LWVUS Shur Fellow, Melissa Currence (a former member of the Young People's Task Force at LWVUS, on the Ohio and Cincinnati League boards, and Interactive Media Manager at the Greater Cincinnati Foundation). Among other things, the call generated some new ways for all of us to be more connected with YOU. "Stay tuned!"

The above is all in addition to the **regional meetings** that are being planned across the state for March and April. Please plan to attend one near you! It is so clear from where I sit how greatly our *relationships* with our local League members strengthen everything we do at the state and national levels. It will be so good to see you there.

Issues and Advocacy Report: Sally Robinson, robintwins@gmail.com

Reminder: State Update and Concurrence

Please Schedule A Time In Your Calendars Before February 15 To Consider The Update On The Charter School Position And The Concurrence On The Death With Dignity Position. The update should be easy and short and may be accomplished during another meeting. The Concurrence maybe require more discussion and take longer, but it is your decision as to how to present the materials and how to schedule this discussion.

Materials for each of these have been mailed and emailed to all local Leagues. One paper copy has gone to a President or one co-President of each local League – we emailed all leaders with the electronic versions and all materials have been be posted on the state website.

Legislative Agenda

The 2018 Legislative Agenda is now available to all local Leagues. It is posted on our website and you can order paper copies them through the state office. We encourage you to use this booklet for education of members, legislators and the public on the issues of concern during the upcoming legislative session. As in the past, we are asking the local Leagues what issues are most important to them and their members. **Please complete and return to the state office the attached Legislative Priorities form by Jan. 31.** We will use this input during our direct lobbying of the legislators and how to prioritize League resources for advocacy work.

Legislative Action, Jennifer Wilson, Legislative Director, jennifer@lwvny.org

Current Legislative Action

At the moment our legislative activity is focusing primarily on voting and ethics. Governor Cuomo once again included early voting in his state budget proposals but without funding. We will be submitting testimony to the Public Protection Budget Committee advocating for funding to support early voting. We will also be submitting testimony to the Local Government Budget Committee urging them to pass the Governor's proposed Article VII legislation on ethics and campaign finance, including closing the LLC loophole, limiting outside income and more.

Rally on Early Voting

On Tuesday, January 23rd, the League participated in a rally to advocate for including funding for early voting in the state budget. The rally was organized by the coalition LetNYVote. LetNYVote is a coalition of grassroots organizations, unions, and other advocacy groups. The rally was a huge success with over 100 attendees including nearly 30 League members. After the rally, some League members lobbied their Senators and Assembly Members on this issue. We were very happy to see so much energy and enthusiasm surrounding early voting. Look at the photos on the League's Facebook page!

Weekly Legislative Newsletter

This year the League has launched a new initiative to help keep members up-to-date on what's going on in Albany. Our weekly legislative newsletter includes what's happening at the Capitol, upcoming events surrounding advocacy, weekly legislative committee agendas, and weekly League news clips. The newsletter is sent to all members every Friday. If you haven't been receiving the newsletter, check your Spam or Junk folder or email Jennifer at Jennifer@lwvny.org to make sure you're on the list.

Pre Budget Legislative Packet and Meetings: Early Voting

A pre-budget lobby packet is in the mail to the President and one Co-President of each local League; it was also emailed to all Presidents on Wed and attached to this email. We are asking local Leagues to schedule lobby visits with their state Assemblymembers and Senators for the February break between February 14th and 26th to urge them to pass early voting and include funding for it in the state budget. The packet includes a support memo that can be given to the legislator, as well as background materials and FAQs on early voting. There will be a conference call on **Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 7:00 pm** for any interested in discussing this topic more, answer any questions before you lobby, etc.; email Jennifer@lwvny.org if you'd like to join the call. Please return the Lobby Report Form (last page of the packet) after your visits so we know what your legislator said about the issue.

Advocacy Training and Lobby Day

The state League's annual Advocacy Training and Lobby Day has been scheduled for **April 24th** in the NYS Museum (we'll make sure you have time to view the special exhibit at the Museum on women's suffrage history, too). Any member is welcome to attend. Come learn about our advocacy agenda, hear directly from the Issue Specialists about our expected action for the 2018 Legislative Session and lobby your own legislators.

A registration form is attached – please print and make available. The link to online registration is: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/i_ELcAUOhYyrY6YYjXYp0g. Please post this link on your website. The topics on which we will be lobbying will depend on how the budget negotiations turn out.

Voter Service Report, Judie Gorenstein, judieL728@aol.com

It is never too early to begin preparing for this year's election season. January and February are months to begin preparation. All Leagues should review their candidate debates/forum policies and make necessary changes. If your League is one of the few who have not yet adopted a policy, now is the time to do it. Remember the policy is the foundation and a clearly written and thorough policy averts problems while preparing for and actually running the night. The policy should include a statement of no empty chair with an explanation and also a policy on recording, limiting recording to only those with written permission and keeping ownership with the League. There are templates available for Leagues to use. We know there are still some Leagues who are unclear about the no empty chair policy and others that are resistant to abiding by it. This is a state policy adopted by old board and agreed on with new board. There will be a conference call on **Wed, Feb. 28 at 7:00 pm** to discuss this new policy with all interested. Watch for more info and how to register for the call.

We all try to learn from one another. An issue that had arose in 2017 with one League was their scheduling an event on a Jewish holiday. We recommend that Leagues look at calendar well in advance for all religious holidays before scheduling any event.

We also recommend that if your League does a candidate event for a primary race and another party is also holding a primary for that particular race, you offer to do the second party's primary as well. This is extremely important as it avoids us being perceived as partisan. Remember this year there will be two primary days. June 26 will be federal primary (any congressional races) and Sept. 11 the state and local primary (any state legislators, statewide elected officials and any local races).

One more important thing to do in the next few months is to call your county BOE and set up a meeting with them. Several Leagues hold these meetings, but all Leagues are now being urged to do so. According to Election Law, the County BOEs are supposed to provide educational programs for high school students and register them to vote. While several of the BOEs do this, others do not. Find out if your County BOE is providing this service, what their program consists of and if not, offer to help them bring a program to the schools. Also, during meeting with the BOE, discuss the Election Law reforms that laws. If enacted, they are ones who will need to comply. Asking their opinions is a good way to develop a strong working relationship. These should be non-confrontational conversations; the goal is to get their feedback on how these programs could be implemented effectively, and what their major concerns are.

Please complete and return the form attached after your visit to provide us with feedback. Remember the visit to the BOE is not to lobby for the reforms as they do not enact the laws, but rather to gain information about their programs and develop an ongoing relationship with them.

State Office, Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director, Laura@lwvny.org **Regional Training Workshops**

On years when there is no state Convention, the state League organizes workshops across the state to help train new members, remind current members of good practices and encourage local Leagues to reach out to neighboring Leagues for events, communication and assistance. On Saturdays in March and April, we are organizing workshops in 4 locations across the state: **Rochester, Ithaca, New Rochelle and the Capitol Region**. The one in New Rochelle has been finalized for **Saturday, March 24** from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The locations and dates of the other 3 days is still being determined. But watch for these notices and be sure to join us to learn more about what other Leagues are doing and how we can work together to make us all stronger, more visible and more active!

Local League Bylaws and Budgets

The state League would like to review every local League's bylaws and current budget. Please send a copy of each to the state office by snail mail, email, fax or whatever is easiest for you. Thanks.

League Updates from LWVUS

Chris Carson, LWVUS President, emails an update every Thursday about LWVUS activities, legislative actions, etc. If you aren't on this list, you should be – it's very informative about LWVUS. To receive the email, just complete the form at http://participate.lwv.org/signup_page/League-update

Youth Programs, Betty Ann King, bking8213@charter.net

We have a new vision for engaging youth participation in the democratic process! You are invited to share your ideas, to ask questions, and to brag about your experiences with youth and government.

Amidst all of this political chaos our country is experiencing exists passion and a desire for activism - to become involved! There also exists a high level of ignorance regarding how government functions and astonishment that changes at all levels require consistent active participation . Without youth interest and involvement who will carry on the tenets and the energy to protect the integrity of our democracy? Right now, we have the attention of people from all age groups. We cannot afford to squander this chance to educate others regarding civic participation.

Youth programs are also fun and blessed with the spirit of "let each become all that one is capable of being." We see that every year in the **Students Inside Albany** program. Surely we all know that this program is motivational often life changing It makes a difference in these lives.

Smaller scale local League youth programs are also inspiring and fun and garner great community respect. Not all Leagues have the resources for a daunting large scale event but we **ALL** have dynamic ideas.

Vision for 2018:

That each League participates in a youth program that encourages civic responsibility at any level. Some steps along the way:

- Identify persons in each League interested in working with youth
- Investigate a partnership with other groups, organizations, schools that share vision; partnerships help to maintain enthusiasm, create new ideas and share the work burden
- Encourage brainstorming! Often the smallest and most “out of the box” idea gleans wonderful results
- Share! Share ideas, share any action, big or small with other Leagues

Please share your ideas for any programs/ projects that Leagues may access. No idea or project is too big or too small. There is a goldmine of amazing youth programs out there as well as innovative ideas for new ones. Soon we will have a mechanism for a sharing program that will be user friendly!

The state website has many descriptions of youth programs, but most are not current. I will contact these Leagues for updates. Kudos and thank you to all of our League members who work tirelessly in educating and fostering active participation in government .

From LWVUS

Resignation of LWVUS CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris

From Chris Carson, LWVUS President:

As some of you already know, at the end of the month we will say goodbye to LWVUS CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris. Wylecia, who joined us in 2015, has led our national team through a time of incredible change, transformation and growth. We thank Wylecia for her many, many contributions to the League and are inspired to continue building on the forward-facing changes she drove during her time with us. The LWVUS board has launched a search process for our next leader, and we look forward to updating you soon.

The LWVUS Board has unanimously agreed to appoint Anisa Tootla (currently COO for LWVUS) as interim CEO. They also hired a nationwide search firm to begin the search for a permanent CEO.

First Call to National Convention 2018

The League of Women Voters’ 53rd National Convention will be held at the Hilton Chicago in Chicago, IL, from Thursday, June 28 through Sunday, July 1, 2018. We invite our League members to save these dates and plan to join hundreds of passionate and engaged leaders for our biennial national gathering. More information and the full "first call" is [available here](#).

Program Planning

Don’t forget to have your local League consider LWVUS Program Planning. These are YOUR members’ recommendations on the LWVUS positions and actions for the next 2 years. You can submit your League’s responses at: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/program-planning-leaders-guide-2018-2020>

Based on the LWVUS Bylaws, here is how you can determine how many delegates your local League can have at Convention:

Sec. 2. Composition. Official membership counts shall be determined by national office records of voting members as reported to the national office in the membership count in January of the year in which the convention is held. The convention shall consist of:

- A. Delegates chosen by the members of local Leagues; each local League shall be entitled to at least one delegate; when local League membership reaches 50 voting members, the local League shall be entitled

to one additional delegate; thereafter one additional delegate shall be authorized for each additional 50 voting members;

B. Three delegates chosen by the board of each state League; when state member-at-large membership reaches 50 voting members, the state League shall be entitled to one additional delegate; thereafter one additional delegate shall be authorized for each additional 50 voting members-at-large;

C. One delegate chosen by the board of each recognized ILO; and

D. The members of the national board.