



# The Broome-Tioga Voter

Bulletin of the *League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties*  
[www.lwv-broometioga.org](http://www.lwv-broometioga.org)

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of  
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Photo Credit: NYS Assembly

**In 2017, New York voters will vote on whether or not to hold a constitutional convention. Come learn more about this important topic. (Article on Page 2).**

## **THE PEOPLE’S CONVENTION: An Overview of the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How of New York State’s Constitutional Convention Question**

**Guest Speakers:  
Laura Ladd Bierman, LWVNYS Executive Director  
Jennifer Wilson, LWVNYS Program & Policy Director**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2017**

**6:45 p.m.\***

**Vestal Public Library, Vestal, NY**

**Public Welcome**

**(The library is accessible to persons with disabilities)**

\*Snow Date: February 28. Check your e-mail or our LWVBTC website and Facebook pages for updates.

## Co-Presidents' Report

At the December brunch one of many topics discussed by Barbara Bartoletti was engagement with elected officials. The League encourages youth to be engaged in government via Students Inside Albany. We encourage you to do the same. *Start the year out right. Get involved.*

Mark your calendar! We are currently making preparations to conduct a great program on just this subject on Saturday, February 18th, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Binghamton, from 10:30 am to 2 p.m. A second program is in the works for March. Further details TBA.

Co-President Gay Canough originally submitted "The antidote to your political angst" as a post on her Facebook page responding to the complaining she was seeing online. With Gay's permission, sharing with you.

### "The antidote to your political angst"

OK, my friends, stop crying and start taking action. The USA, for all its faults, is still one of the few countries where there are official and well-laid out ways to make your voice heard. One of those is to VOTE, which I understand only about half the voters actually did this past November. Well, that is sad. But there is another thing on this list: Communicate with your representatives. That goes for all levels from the village to the federal government, from the Town board of trustees to the President of the United States. Communicate. I think we all know we are supposed to do that, but few people do. What this has resulted in is that the biggest money has the biggest voice. The Congress has big money interests on their doorstep daily. But it does not have to be that way. The "grassroots" can win. A perfect example of that is the ban on fracking in NY. More recently, the Dakota pipeline is at least on hold due to grassroots efforts. Furthermore, most politicians really want to do the right thing and they want to serve the interests of their constituents. And they love to hear what their "regular folks" constituents want and need. So, this year, I will be engaging with local organizations to help people get started. There will be workshops, scripts, template letters and so on.

To kick that off, here is the League of Women Voters list of your local and state and federal reps (<http://www.lwvbroometioga.org/TRY.html>). This is the 2016 list and there will be a few changes in 2017.

Here are some tips to get started. 1) Do it today. 2) Pick out one issue you care about and/or which affects you. 3) Send your Representative (Rep) a paper letter (which is more likely to be read than an email). a. Keep letter length to one page b. Be polite c. Check your spelling and grammar d. Sign your name 4) Calling is even better than writing, but it would not hurt to do both. 5) Visiting your Rep in person is even better. They all have local offices.

~Gay Canough, Co-President

~Margaret Goodfellow, 1st Vice President and Voter Service Chair.

## NYS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION?

Every 20 years, the New York State Constitution mandates that voters be faced with this ballot question: "*Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?*" It may sound like a simple yes/no question, but there are important factors to consider.

Keep in mind that the NYS Constitution touches our lives in many ways. It both limits the broad governmental power inherent in state government and confers positive rights upon citizens. It includes an expansive bill of rights, governs voting procedures and runs the gamut from taxes to education. Delegates can recommend changes, deletions or additions to any and/or all state policies. Voters have the final say.

Here are some of the key questions that need answers before a convention is approved:

When would a convention be held?

Where would a convention be held?

Who can be a delegate? (E.g, should government officials or legislators be permitted to serve?)

How are delegates elected?

How will delegates organize themselves?

What will this cost?

Some (but by no means all) of the issues likely to be addressed include election law, term limits, redistricting, ethics, selection of judges, taxation, education funding, Forever Wild, reproductive choice, and pensions.

Our guest speakers will present an overview of the opportunities and challenges related to the question of whether or not to have a constitutional convention. We will have an opportunity to offer our thoughts and questions for consideration by the LWVNYS board as it updates the League's position on constitutional conventions. (Sneak preview: Currently the League does not support or oppose the concept of a constitutional convention but does specify principles on how a convention should be organized and conducted. The last time around, delegate selection was a big sticking point.)

Learn more at [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org), and plan to attend the meeting on January 24th.

~ Jane Park

Please also see the diagram on page 5.

## Voter Service Report

**Debates.** The elections are over and your local League was front and center again his year. We conducted three debates, NY-22, Primary and General and Broome County Executive. Our NY-22 general debate was nationally broadcast live on CSPAN 2. The Broome County Debate generated a front page story in the *Press and Sun-Bulletin*.

**Vote 411.** Usage nationwide far surpassed all previous years. Vote 411 was recommended by other media as the place to go for non-partisan info, including a mention in the *New York Times*. Locally, there was a 1.9% increase in the candidate response rate over 2015 with forty-seven (47) candidates in twenty-four (24) races invited to participate in contested races with the sole exception of NY Assembly-Clifford Crouch. Candidate response rate was 57.47% compared to forty-three (43) candidates in twenty (20) races and a 55.5% response rate in 2015.

**Voter Registration.** Fifteen events were conducted throughout Broome and Tioga Counties this year, including naturalization ceremonies.

**Interviews:** I was interviewed twice by WNBC Radio, first about our National League President's letter of advice and warning to moderators regarding the Presidential Debates and second regarding Vote 411. Full report in the April Voter and Call to Annual Meeting.

**Attorney General Eric Schneiderman**, in his December 5 to December 9, 2016 newsletter, THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS, released a scathing report on voting incidents during the April presidential primary with recommendations for legislative action. The League has continually and diligently advocated on these issues. We look forward to reviewing what specific legislation the AG will propose in the upcoming legislative session. Below is his article followed by a link to the full report.



This week I was in Albany to release my office's comprehensive report on the unprecedented number of complaints received regarding the April presidential

primary - and my proposals to reform the system. The voting issues we uncovered were widespread, systemic, and unacceptable. New York must become a national leader by protecting and expanding voting rights throughout the state.

### Results of the Inquiry

Nearly two-thirds of complaints received by my office involved barriers posed by voter registration rules, laws, procedures and practices, including:

- Voters not affiliated with the Democratic or Republican party had to meet exceedingly restrictive deadlines for party enrollment in order to vote in the primary.
- Voters were barred from voting because state agencies did not transmit registration information in a timely way, or at all, to local BOEs.
- The DMV's online registration system stalled twice and ultimately went offline after receiving an unprecedentedly high volume of registration requests prior to the deadline.

Voters were barred from voting because of errors on the part of local BOEs in processing registrations.

An additional 20 percent of complaints involved barriers posed by unwieldy laws, rules, procedures and practices related to the voting process, such as:

Local BOEs inhibited voter access to affidavit ballots  
Reduced poll hours in select counties led to confusion and prevented some voters from voting.

Voters were confused about their polling locations because they were not warned their polling place had moved.

I also plan to introduce a comprehensive bill to reform the state's voting systems. My recommendations include:

- Automatic Voter Registration of Eligible Voters
- Same-Day Registration for New Voters
- Online Voter Registration
- Create a System of Permanent Voter Registration
- Allow Registered Voters to Change Their Party Enrollment Closer to Primary Day
- Adopt a System of Early Voting
- Provide for "No Excuse" Absentee Voting
- Ensure Uniformity of Poll Site Hours Across the State
- Consolidate Federal, State and Local Primaries on Single Day
- Enact Disaster Preparedness Protections
- Increase Language Access
- Protect Voters from Improper Challenges
- Restore Voting Rights for Citizens on Parole
- Enhance Poll Worker Training and Recruitment

You can read the full report on-line at:

[https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2016\\_statewide\\_elections\\_report.pdf](https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2016_statewide_elections_report.pdf)

Source: NYS Attorney General

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret Goodfellow  
1st Vice President and Voter Service Chair

## *A Suffragist Centennial Moment*

### Welcome New League Members!

The following new members have joined our League since our last newsletter was printed.

Caroline Basso  
Jeremy Coffey  
Madeleine V. Cotts  
Margaret Gates  
Shannon Hanrahan  
Katharine Krebs  
Sarah McKercher  
Linn Underhill

#### Lobby Day 2017

Mark your calendars for Lobby Day 2017 on April 25 in Albany. We will hear from our issue specialists on “hot topics” and coordinate visits with your own legislators to lobby on issues.

#### League’s State Convention Is Coming!

The 57<sup>th</sup> State League Convention is scheduled for June 10-11, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Express in Liverpool, NY (just off the Thruway near Syracuse). We will be sending out the registration kits in February. In the meantime, we need some help from our local Leagues and members.

#### Field Trip!

To celebrate women achieving the right to vote in 1917 in NYS, the state League is organizing a field trip from Liverpool to Seneca Falls on Friday, June 9 (day before Convention actually begins). This is will a separate charge and everyone is welcome (not just convention attendees); tours of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton home, Women’s Hall of Fame and the Women’s Rights National History Park (and Wesleyan Chapel), as well as dinner and a speaker at an historic restaurant in Seneca Falls, will be included. You will need to be in Liverpool by noon on Friday to join this trip. Watch for more information in the registration kit.

Did you know.....

British women were Suffragettes, in the USA we were known as **Suffragists**.

In January 1917, Lisle was the site of the first women voting in New York State . The issue was whether there would be alcohol in Lisle. Lillian Huffcut was one of our first activists in Broome County.

A Women’s Suffrage Booth was set up at the Broome County Fair.

Tioga’s Suffragists included....

Esther Morris, the first woman Town Justice in Wyoming; statues of her are in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Washington, DC! She cleverly persuaded politicians from both parties to back the vote for women in Wyoming in 1870! Born in Spencer!

<http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2014/08/esther-hobart-morris.html>

<http://wyoarchives.state.wy.us/Archives/Research.aspx?ID=2>

18 Front Street in Owego was the location of the first Suffrage Office in Tioga.

Donna Lupardo has established a Women’s Suffrage Committee of Broome and Tioga Counties to plan our celebration. We need ephemera to display at Roberson, including clothing and objects of the era. Discussion and planning for a year of celebration is planned. We would like to reenact the Suffragist Parade in Binghamton on 10/14/17 the same date as the original! A request was made for an antique car to serve as the “Suffrage Car” in the 1917 parade. Do you have ideas and suggestions? Please contact us!!!

~Sara Wokan

[sara.wokan@gmail.com](mailto:sara.wokan@gmail.com)

~Sue Ruff

[advocate@stic-cil.org](mailto:advocate@stic-cil.org)

### **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dates**

November 6, 2017  
November 19, 2019  
February 14, 2020  
August 26, 2020

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of New York State  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National League of Women Voters  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the official certification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment by the US Secretary of State



*The League of Women Voters*, a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**Men and women of voting age are welcome to join.**

***Be Part of the Action—Join Today!***

**Membership Application**

- Individual membership \$50/yr.
- Household membership \$75/yr. (2 people)
- Student membership \$20/yr.
- Send me information about the League.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

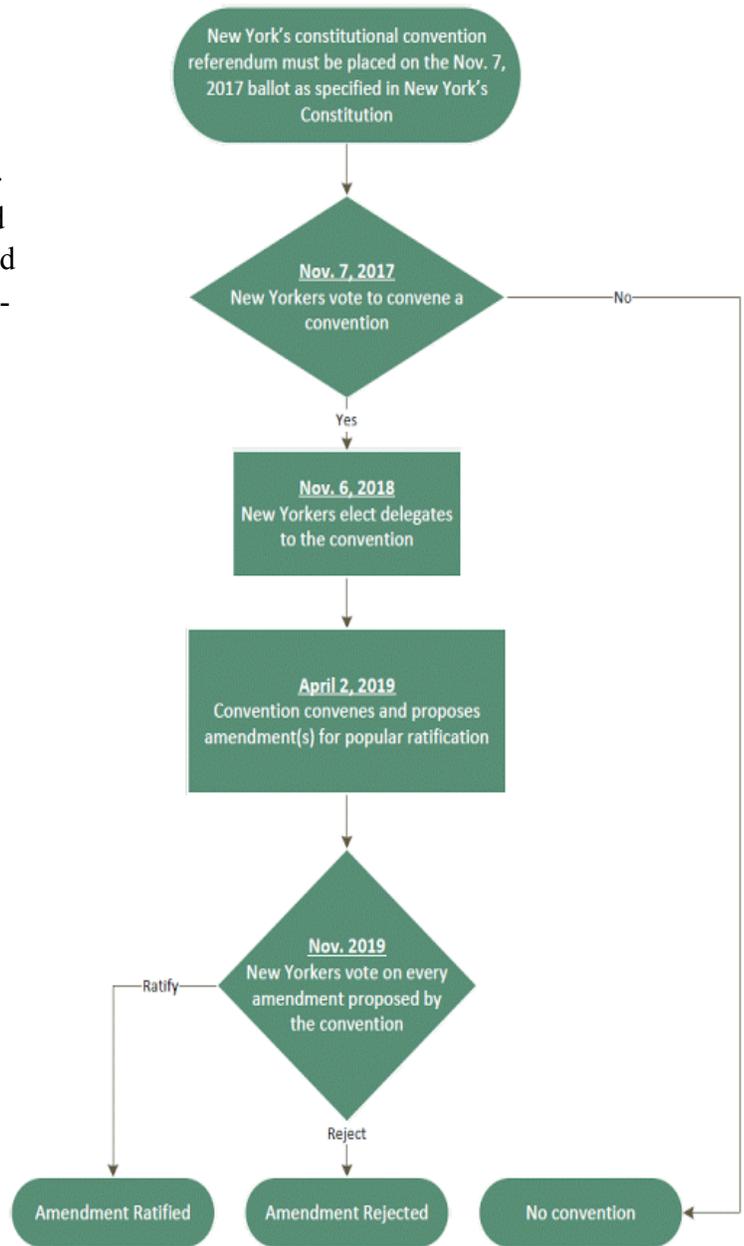
Email \_\_\_\_\_

***Make checks payable to LWVBTC and mail with this coupon to LWVBTC, PO Box 944, Vestal, NY 13851-0944.***

I would like to support the League with a tax deductible contribution to the LWVNY Education Foundation \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

***Make checks payable to “LWVNY Education Foundation” and mail with this coupon to LWVBTC, PO Box 944, Vestal, NY 13851-0944.***

**Constitutional Convention Timeline**



Source: New York State Constitutional Clearing House



### Students Inside Albany-Call for Candidates

Nominations of *Broome and Tioga County* high school students are sought for the 17<sup>th</sup> annual *Students Inside Albany* conference, scheduled for May 21-24, 2017 in Albany. The conference, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc., is designed to increase students' awareness of their responsibility in a representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility. This interactive conference will bring together high school students from across the state to learn about New York State government *and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy making arena*. As part of this program, students will also tour the Capitol and observe both the Senate and Assembly in action by spending an afternoon shadowing their legislators.

Expenses are covered by the state and local Leagues. Participants receive a one year student membership in the League of Women Voters, which includes an e-mail newsletter and invitations to meetings on government related topics.

For more information contact Margaret Goodfellow at 655-1929 *or by email at [mgoodfel@binghamton.edu](mailto:mgoodfel@binghamton.edu)*. *Application deadline is Wednesday, February 15, 2017. Materials are available for download on our website. <http://www.lwv-broometioga.org>.*

#### From our archives:

In looking at the January 2011 issue of the *Broome-Tioga Voter*, we ran across a book that may be of interest to you. Nate Levin is the author of *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Life of Leadership*, available on Amazon.com.

Ruth Levin, Nate's mother, has been a member of the League for nearly fifty years and has continued her membership in our local League even though she moved to Arizona a few years ago. Ruth informed us that it was Nate's membership in our League that sparked his interest in Carrie Chapman Catt and women's suffrage. Nate is also a contributor to the Facebook site *Suffrage Buffs of America*.

In 2010, to honor the 90th anniversary of the League, our local League donated a copy of Nate's book to every middle school library in Broome and Tioga Counties.



Gumerocindo Perez with Elizabeth Lopez and Ariel Perez (with American flag).

### 2016 Naturalization Ceremonies

(All held on Friday)

February 3, 2017

April 28, 2017

July 14, 2017

September 8, 2017

November 17, 2017

11 a.m. - Broome County Courthouse

Join us! Contact:

Sara Wokan	785-6703
Susan Ruff	761-7557
Margaret Goodfellow	655-1929



New citizens taking the oath of citizenship.

NOVEMBER 7, 2016  
Albany, NY

## Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation Securing New York State's Place in the National Popular Vote Compact

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed legislation that secures New York's place on the list of states that have joined National Popular Vote compact. By signing this legislation, Governor Cuomo seeks to guarantee that every vote in every state will matter in every presidential election.

The bill (S.5478/A.6044) modifies [legislation signed](#) by Governor Cuomo in 2014 that added New York to an interstate agreement in which member states commit to award their electoral votes for president to the candidate that receives a majority of the national popular vote. The original legislation required that New York be removed from the compact at the end of 2018 if the agreement had not been adopted nationally. This new measure removed this expiration date and keeps New York on the list of states supporting the National Popular Vote indefinitely.

"This action will help ensure every vote is treated equally and places New York at the forefront of the battle for fairer elections and strengthen our democracy," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Making the national popular vote a binding one will enable all voices to be heard and encourage candidates to appeal to voters in all states."

By signing on to the National Popular Vote Compact, New York pledges to award its 29 electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote in ALL 50 States plus the District of Columbia, but only to take effect once enough other states have passed identical legislation to comprise a majority of the Electoral College's 538 votes. The compact currently contains 165 of the necessary 270 electoral votes (61 percent).

A federal constitutional amendment is not required to effect this change, as Article II, Section 1 of the United States Constitution provides states the plenary power to award electoral votes in any manner they choose. Currently, like 47 other states, New York uses the winner-take-all method in which the winner of the popular vote in New York State receives all of its electors. This method was used by only 3 states in 1789.

The National Popular Vote legislation adheres to the

basic principles of fairness in elections. Under the current winner-take-all system, Presidential candidates are able to ignore reliably Republican and Democratic states, like New York, and focus all of their attention and resources on a select group of battleground states. Therefore, candidates have no reason to focus on the many issues that matter to millions of New Yorkers across the state. The current system artificially divides the country into red, blue, and swing states. New York is a victim of this system despite ranking 4th in the country with over 13 million eligible voters, New York ranked dead last in Presidential campaign spending.

**Senator Joseph Griffo said,** "As Election Day finally arrives, every New Yorker wants to know their vote for President will matter in deciding the future of our country. I am proud to have sponsored legislation that will allow New York State to join the National Popular Vote Compact, and the amendment signed by the Governor today will now give more states enough time to join this interstate agreement. A national popular vote compact will make New York relevant, so that we can't be ignored or taken for granted as the candidates instead fight over the few winner-take-all battleground states that historically have decided who is elected president. In the 21st Century, every vote really should count, and this legislation will help achieve that democratic ideal in a way that respects the Constitution."

**Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz said,** "Only in the world's greatest democracy, the person who receives the most votes for President is not necessarily the winner. National Popular Vote would change that, and it would mean that every American's vote in every state would count equally. Currently, New York is a bystander in Presidential elections, where candidates spend most of the time in battleground states. It's time that New York issues count – that New Yorkers count. I am proud to be the sponsor of National Popular Vote in New York and applaud Governor Cuomo for signing this legislation that will keep the National Popular Vote compact in place in New York."

The compact has now been enacted through legislation in 10 states: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, as well as Washington D.C.

-<http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-legislation-securing-new-york-states-place-national-popular-vote-compact>

# The Broome-Tioga Voter

The League of Women Voters of Broome & Tioga Counties  
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Phone: 607-834-0127

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