



**The**  
**LOCAL VOTER**  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
**SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA**

**NOVEMBER 2017**

Syracuse Metro LWV  
PO Box 11862  
Syracuse NY 13218  
Phone: (315) 396-8225  
Email: league@lwvsyr.org  
Web Sites:  
Local: www.lwvsyr.org  
State: www.lwvny.org  
National: www.lwv.org

**GENERAL ELECTION-TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7th**

**POLLS OPEN 6AM-9PM**

**REMINDERS**

Apply for absentee ballot by mail: postmarked by Tuesday, October 31st

Apply for absentee ballot in person by Monday, November 6th

Deliver ballot in person by Tuesday, November 7th

Deliver ballot by mail must be postmarked by Monday, November 6th

*Don't forget to turn your ballot over to vote on the 4 propositions*

**Calendar**

Saturday, Nov 4th

Votes for Women Reception, 5-8 pm

NYS Museum, Albany

Tuesday, November 7th

Election Day

Tuesday, Nov 4th

Gage Event

Saturday, Nov 11th

LWVSYR Board Meeting - 9:30am

Dunkin Donuts Teal Av, Syracuse



**Celebrating 100 Years of  
Women Suffrage in NYS  
1917-2017**

League members are invited to take part in an "I Voted" event at the Matilda Joslyn Gage grave site & home on Election Day. Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul & LWNYS President Dare Thompson



will place an "I Voted" sticker on Gage's grave stone followed by a reception from 2:30-3:30pm at the Gage home.



**Get Election Info You Need!**

Find polling places and voting information at

[www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org)

**Get Involved!**

Learn who the candidates are and where they stand on the issues at

[www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org)

Learn about the ballot questions on the back of your ballot at

[www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org)

**League of Women Voters of the Syracuse Metro Area**

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# BOARD NOTES

**Don't forget**

It's time to renew your League Membership for the 2017-2018 League year. Notices were sent out in June with a follow up in July. If you have not renewed your membership, we encourage you to do so soon. You can use the form on the last page of this newsletter to renew your membership if you have misplaced your formal notice. If you have renewed, thank you!

## ***Welcome new members***

***Pamela Percival***

***Rich O'Neil***

***Marguerite Conan***

***James Traver***

## **VOTER SERVICE**

Syracuse LWV members have been busy this fall with election activities. The Constitutional Convention has provide an opportunity to educate citizens on the pros and cons of convening a NYS Constitutional Convention. We have hosted events at OASIS, Syracuse Federation of Women's Clubs, Marcellus Library and the Strathmore Speakers Series. The League also participated in the taping of WCNY's Constitutional Convention Debate that was aired on Monday, October 23rd at 9:00PM.

Members registered new voters at Onondaga Community College on National Registration Day, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Working with other organizations, we held registration events at various locations including the Centro Bus Hub and the CNY Farmers Market. We also registered voters at the Everson Museum before their Movies Under the Stars Program this summer.

As always we continue to register new citizens at Naturalization Ceremonies. Naturalization Ceremonies take place throughout the year and we are always looking for volunteers to help us. Please contact Joan Durant at [joandurant69@gmail.com](mailto:joandurant69@gmail.com) or 315-673-4837 for more information.

The League also co-sponsored city wide candidates debates at the Southwest Community Center – including the candidates for mayor, common council, city school board and city court judges.

***Thanks to all who have volunteered to help.***

## **Officers**

Leadership Team...

Joan Durant  
Joan Johnson  
Margrit Diehl  
Roberta Millert  
Harold Bertram  
Diane Dwire  
Roberta Millert

Secretary...  
Treasurer....

## **Directors**

Education  
Membership ...

Margrit Diehl  
Heather Allison Waters

Publications/Public Relations...  
Voter Service...

Joan Johnson  
Joan Durant

Directors-at-large...

Michele Jones Galvin  
Charles Gowing  
Sandra Gowing  
Ann Jamison  
Sylvia Matousek  
Lisa Sacco

## **Off-Board Positions**

Budget Director....  
Membership Data Base...

Lisa Sacco  
Roberta Millert

Nominating Committee.....

Lisa Alford  
Ona Bregman  
Michele Jones Galvin

Technical Support...

Roberta Millert

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information please call the League office at (315) 396-8225 or e-mail to [league@lwvsyr.org](mailto:league@lwvsyr.org)

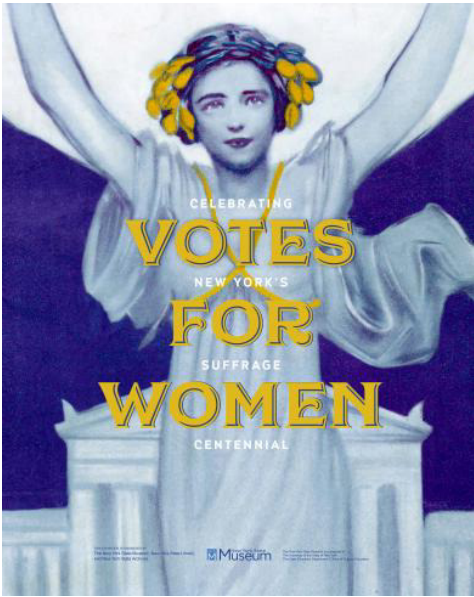
## **Diversity Statement**

The Syracuse Metropolitan League of Women Voters is committed to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any League activity on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, or national origin.



Please let us know your email address or if your address has changed. It is the most efficient way to communicate. You will be notified of upcoming local events and LWVUS and LWVNY National & State Action Alerts and news.

**Your e-mail address will not be shared or sold. Please respond to [league@lwvsyr.org](mailto:league@lwvsyr.org) if there has been a change on**



**VOTES FOR WOMEN:  
CELEBRATING NEW YORK'S WOMEN'S  
SUFFRAGE HISTORY**

**NOVEMBER 4, 2017  
5:00-8:00 PM**

**NYS MUSEUM CULTURAL EDUCATION CENTER  
222 MADISON AVENUE, ALBANY NY**

The League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation and the New York Archives Partnership Trust invite you to a special evening reception celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in New York State and the opening of the State Museum's *Votes for Women Exhibit*.

Coline Jenkins great great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, will speak about growing up in a family of women activists. In addition to Stanton, her great grandmother Harriot Stanton Blatch, worked as a major organizer for New York State women suffrage during the Militant period of 1913-1915. Her grandmother, Nora Stanton Blatch DeForest Barney, was the first female civil engineer to graduate from Cornell University in 1905. Jenkins' mother was born one month prior to the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920. Jenkins grew up in an atmosphere of suffrage and women's rights campaigning.

Museum staff will also serve as guides as we have private access to this new exhibit. Proceeds from the reception benefit the educational programs of the LWVNY Education Foundation and the NYS Archives Partnership Trust. Tickets for the reception can be purchased online at [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org), calling the state league office at 518-465-4162 or by mailing the form below with payment to LWVNYS, 62 Grand Street, Albany NY 12207.



Please select an option from the list below:

- \$50 "Suffrage" Patron Ticket - includes one ticket to the opening reception, lecture, & tour
- \$150 "Sentiments" Patron Tickets - includes 2 tickets to the opening reception, lecture & tour
- \$500 "Ratification" Benefactor - includes 2 tickets to the opening reception, lecture with preferred seating and tour, a copy of the Votes for Women exhibit catalog & listing as a benefactor on print and electronic materials
- \$1000 "Votes for Women" Benefactor - includes 4 tickets to the opening reception, lecture with preferred seating and tour, a copy of the Votes for Women exhibit catalog & listing as a benefactor on print and electronic materials & one-year individual membership to the League of Women Voters of NYS & the NYS Archives Partnership Trust.
- \$30 Reserve your copy of the State Museum's "Votes for Women" exhibit catalog by pre ordering & receiving it at the reception

## DISPELLING THE MYTHS OF A NYS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

By Peter J. Galie and Christopher Bopst \*

On Election Day, November 7, 2017, all New Yorkers who go to the polls will be given a ballot containing Proposition One, which will say: *Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?*

Unfortunately, the information surrounding the debate on this issue is tainted with inaccurate descriptions of the process, false claims about the consequences of calling a convention, and misrepresentations that distort our constitutional tradition and are inconsistent with our current political culture. These claims have been repeated so often that they have come to be taken as fact. We hope to correct the record and give the public a more informed understanding.

### MYTH #1

The constitutional convention question has been deliberately put on the back of the ballot to favor a “yes” outcome.

**REALITY:** Since New York started using paper ballot scanners in 2010, propositions have been placed on the back of the ballot. Voters will be instructed at the polls that the ballot has two sides.

### MYTH #2

The timing of the constitutional convention vote has something to do with what is happening in Washington, D.C.

**REALITY:** In 1846, the New York Constitution was amended to give voters the right every twenty years to decide, independent of the state legislature, to convene a state constitutional convention. The timing of the twenty-year period has been adjusted over time, with the current cycle being 1957 and every twentieth year after. The same question was asked of voters in 1957, 1977 and 1997.

### MYTH #3

A constitutional convention is a radical way to amend the state constitution.

**REALITY:** New York has two ways to amend its state constitution: legislative amendment and constitutional convention. Throughout its history, New York has had NINE constitutional conventions. Our last convention was held in 1967. The period since that convention is the longest time New York has gone without a con-stitutional convention. The process is neither radical nor inconsistent with New York’s constitutional history.

### MYTH #4

If there is a constitutional convention, the existing state legislators get to pick the delegates.

**REALITY:** If voters approve a constitutional convention in November 2017, there will be 204 delegates elected in November 2018. Three delegates will be elected in each of the state’s 63 senate districts, and 15 at large delegates will be elected statewide. District delegates will get nominated and elected the same way candidates for state senate would get elected. State party committees will nominate slates of 15 at large delegates.

### MYTH #5

A constitutional convention is empowered to approve whatever it wants and those propositions automatically become part of the constitution.

**REALITY:** Anything that the constitutional convention adopts must be submitted to New York voters (most likely in November 2019). The voters will have final approval over everything the convention proposes.

### MYTH #6

A constitutional convention will cost in the neighborhood of \$300 million.

**REALITY:** Although impossible to predict with certainty the exact amount of convention expenditures, past conventions provide a basis for reasonable estimates. The 1967 convention (including a commission hired to assemble data in anticipation of the convention) cost \$7,580,885, which translates to \$55,425,833 in 2017 dollars—not even close to \$300 million. Although \$55 million is significant, it represents only about three hundredths of one percent (0.0003) of the state’s \$163 billion annual budget.

### MYTH #7

A constitutional convention would likely go on for years and years, and the cost would keep going up exponentially.

**REALITY:** All but one of New York’s nine conventions completed their work in the same year they convened. One convention, held during 1867-68, in the wake of a divisive civil war, extended into a second year. The constitution provides that delegates receive the same amount of compensation regardless of how long the convention lasts, giving them an incentive to be diligent.

### MYTH #8

At the last convention, most of the delegates were sitting legislators.

**REALITY:** The constitution does not bar sitting legislators from serving as delegates. The practice has been that the vast majority of legislators have chosen not to run for delegate. In 1967, only 13 of the 186 delegates (approximately 7 percent) were sitting legislators.

***Myths, continued:***

**MYTH #9**

Conventions never get anything done.

**REALITY:** Almost all of the rights we New Yorkers have under our state constitution were added by constitutional conventions, and constitutional conventions are responsible for the current structure of our state government. Even the few times in New York's history that the voters have rejected the work of a constitutional convention, much of the convention's work later found its way into the constitution.

**MYTH #10**

There is little or no difference between a constitutional convention and a legislature, so shifting the venue will make little difference

**REALITY:** Constitutional conventions in New York have been much more successful at making structural changes than the legislature. Why is

this? Because constitutional conventions and legislative bodies differ in significant respects. There is only one house in a convention (as opposed to a senate and an assembly); conventions have a singular purpose and can dedicate all their resources to constitutional revision; convention delegates have no pressure for re-election as delegates; seniority is not a factor in committee and leadership assignments; and because the convention goes out of existence when it completes its work, control by convention leadership cannot reach the level it does in the legislature.

**MYTH #11**

The groups supporting a constitutional convention want to take rights away.

**REALITY:** Constitutional conventions throughout New York's history have consistently added rights to the document. Almost every single right that New Yorkers enjoy today—individual or collective, was added by a constitutional convention. The groups that have come out in favor of a constitutional convention—the New York State Bar Association, the League of Women Voters, and Citizens Union—have dedicated themselves to protecting and enhancing rights for New Yorkers.

**MYTH #12**

The convention is being supported by "dark money."

**REALITY:** An August 2017 Politico New York review of spending records showed that groups opposing the constitutional convention spent a total of \$24.2 million in 2016 on lobbying efforts, including contributions to state-level candidates, parties and super PACs. The groups supporting the convention spent \$389,000 in 2016. There are well-financed special interests who are putting real money into the constitutional convention vote—for the "no" side.

**MYTH #13**

A convention would put public employee pensions at risk.

**REALITY:** Any existing public employee's or retiree's existing pension is protected by the U.S. Constitution, and could not be reduced or taken away by a constitutional convention.

**MYTH #14**

A convention is likely to take away constitutional protections that New Yorkers value, such as labor rights, protections for the needy, and environmental protections.

**REALITY:** Regardless of whatever is happening nationally, public opinion polls indicate strong support for these protections among New Yorkers. The same New Yorkers that will elect delegates and vote on their proposals have indicated support for an EXPANSION of the government's role in preserving and expanding these protections. "Siena Research Institute Poll October 2017 voters oppose revising state policies to allow increased development in the Adirondacks and limiting collective bargaining rights of public employees."

**MYTH #15**

The legislature will make the constitutional changes we need.

**REALITY:** Although the legislature can propose amendments to the voters, and often does so, the amendments it has proposed have not: imposed any institutional controls on the legislature's pay to play culture, established an apportionment plan that results in competitive elections, repaired a judiciary that ranks among the most inefficient in the nation, addressed the gap between the state and its municipalities, amended state and local finance policies mired in the nineteenth century, increased electoral participation or added rights to clean air and water. The legislature is simply not equipped to take on the task of making the serious and extensive reforms necessary to enable New York to find the path to renewed greatness.

**\*Christopher Bopst- Constitutional & Litigation Partner, Goldberg Segalla LLP**

**Peter J Galie- Professor Emeritus, Canisius College**

### Proposal for Update of LWVNYS Charter School Position



At the 2017 State Convention, delegates approved an update on the Charter School position adopted in 2006. The update would allow for the deletion of the following sentence.

**“In lieu of amendment of the Charter School**

**Act to increase the total number of charters that could be granted, it supports retention of the current total (100) with amendment of the Charter School Act so that a charter could be reissued if a charter school ceased to function for any reason.”**

The charter school cap is the statutory limit on the number of charter schools that can open in New York State. The 100 charter school cap has been exceeded over the years and is no longer a relevant number. The charter cap is divided by the New York City area and the non-New York City area. Currently the state cap is set at 460 with a smaller sub-cap for New York City. In New York City, 45 total charters are available to be issued in the future, and in regions outside of New York City, 102 total charters are available to be issued.

Removing this sentence will not effect our current position on charter schools. Removing this sentence does not mean the League supports an unlimited number of charter schools in New York State. The League will continue to support a limitation on the number of charters in New York State. We believe that the number of charter schools should not be increased without evidence of prior successful implementation. We believe that charter schools should prove that they have positive education outcomes and that they should be particularly mindful of special needs students. We will also continue to advocate for greater oversight of charter schools and ensuring that tradition public schools continue to receive adequate funding regardless of the creation of new charter institutions.

What do you think? Should the statement be eliminated or should it stay? Email us at [league@lwvsyr.org](mailto:league@lwvsyr.org) or call us at 315-396-8225

### Proposal To Concur with the LWV of Utah On Death With Dignity

Delegates at the June Convention also approved reviewing the LWV of Utah’s position on position on Death with Dignity. Death with Dignity legislation has been introduced in the last few years in New York, but it is not covered under the League’s current Health Care positions.

Death with Dignity legislation has become of increasing public interest and concern. Currently 5 states have legislation allowing physician aid in dying - Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont and California.

The League of Women Voters of Utah believes state laws should grant the option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one’s life. The Utah position also believes such legislation should include safeguards against abuse for the dying and/or medical personnel.

LWVNY has compiled a packet of materials on the issue and suggest that local leagues review it and come to consensus on whether to support these items.

The materials are on the state league website ([www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)). If the subject is of interest to you please consider sitting on a committee to review the information . Call the league office at 315-396-8225 or email us at [lwvsyr.org](http://lwvsyr.org) if you would like to be on the committee or if you have any questions.



## ***Women's Day at the NYS Fair***



Several league members and friends attended the annual luncheon on Women's Day at the State Fair. Key note speaker Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul noting the 100th anniversary of women suffrage in New York State, spoke on how we still have a long way to go to gain equality in the political arena as well as the work place. We were also pleased to have LWNYS President Dare Thompson join us for lunch. From left to right, Kathy Hochul, Dare Thompson, Ann Jamison, Rhonda Hungerford, Joan Durant, Lisa Sacco, Gerry Berkman, & Sandra Gowing

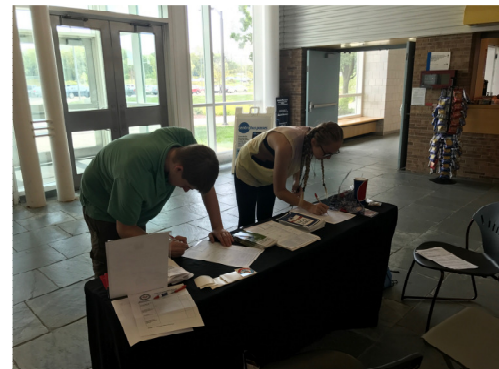
## ***National Voter Registration Day At Onondaga County Community College***

With the help of students from the OCC Students Political Club we registered students at three locations on the OCC campus on National Voter Registration Day, September 26, 2017. Seated at the right, League members Charlie Gowing and ErinLeigh Damley with a member of the OCC Political Club. Jon Booth, Joan Durant, Roberta Millert and Joan Johnson also participated in the event.



## ***Con Con Informational Meeting***

Marcellus Free Library  
Presenters Joan Durant & Joan Johnson



## ***Election Day 2017 – Turn Over Your Ballot***

On the back of your ballot there will be three state-wide ballot questions and one Onondaga County question:

- 1). Shall there be a convention to revise the Constitution and amend the same?
- 2). Do you support or oppose a proposal to allow for the complete or partial forfeiture of a public officer's pension if he or she is convicted of a certain type of felony?
- 3). Do you support or oppose authorizing the use of forest preserve land for specified purposes?
- 4). Shall there be approval in Onondaga County a Local Law entitled: "A Local Law amending the Onondaga County Charter and Administrative Code regarding the Onondaga County Department of Corrections placing the Onondaga County Department of Corrections under the control of the Sheriff?"

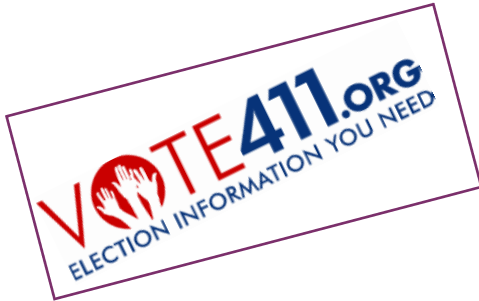


**Pros & Cons for supporting the state-wide questions can be found on your ballot at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)**



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
 SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA  
 PO BOX 11862  
 SYRACUSE NY 13218**

**November 2017**



**JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

***MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK IN NEW YORK SINCE 1919***

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual Member \$55.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Household\* \$80.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Student\*\* \$25.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C)

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**To join call us at (315)396-8225, email us at [league@lwvsyr.org](mailto:league@lwvsyr.org) or mail this form to Syracuse Metro LWV, PO Box 11862, Syracuse NY 13218.**

**ANNUAL DUES—July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018**

\* Two members in the same household    \*\* Full time student under 25

***Please share this information with others who have expressed interest in our work or who have thought about becoming a member of the League..***