

# News From *Your* State League

Update from LWVNYS

September 2008

## LWVNYS Welcomes New Executive Director

A member of the League for over 25 years, Laura Ladd Bierman will become executive director of the LWVNYS with experience from four different local Leagues in three states. She has served in a number of positions in local Leagues, including study chair, newsletter editor, board member, Vice President, and President. Laura holds a masters degree in public administration and has career experience in the areas of health care planning and providing financial and consulting services to a national membership organization.

Welcome, Laura! We look forward to working with you!

## National Popular Vote Study

At the LWVUS Convention in Portland, OR, in June, the delegates voted to adopt a national study titled "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact Among the States as a Method for Electing the President".

Lori Dawson, study chair for LWVNYS, encourages NYS Leaguers to get a jump start on preparing for this national study by reading the NPV study materials assembled last year by our state League study committee. These materials are available for download at the state League website. The actual study and consensus questions will be put together by the national study committee.

## Voting Rights Pamphlet Series

LWVNYS is preparing five new pamphlets related to the voting rights of five different special populations. These are: college students, individuals incarcerated and with criminal convictions, homeless individuals, those with mental health disabilities, and individuals with other disabilities, primarily physical.

Watch the LWVNYS website, where each pamphlet will be available in both print-ready PDF format and as HTML documents.

## State Legislative Agenda 2009

Your LWVNYS Board is asking the local League Boards to provide input on the selection of legislative priorities for 2009. Any member can have a voice in this important process. Tell your local Board what issues you'd like the LWVNYS to focus on in Albany in 2009.

## Access to Information Improves

Three new websites provide the taxpayer with information about where their tax dollars go. Some of this information was previously available only by filing an F.O.I.L. request.

[www.SeeThroughNY.net](http://www.SeeThroughNY.net) features searchable databases of NYS governmental employees, including job titles and salaries. It also includes teachers' union and superintendent contracts for nearly every school district in the State, the Legislature's pork-barrel "community projects" spending for 2008-2009, and internal operations expenditures for both the Assembly and the NYS Senate.

Open Book New York, from the office of the NYS Comptroller ([www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/openbook/)), gives taxpayers unprecedented access to financial information of our State government. This includes spending by 113 State agencies and public authorities and display of more than 60,000 state contracts. You can even search State contracts to see who is doing business with the State.

Project Sunlight provides a prototype for how government should make information available to citizens in the digital age ([www.SunlightNY.com](http://www.SunlightNY.com)). It includes information about individual elected officials, campaign finance activities, legislation, lobbyists, state contracts, and registered corporations and charities. This website also offers educational videos and materials about the basic laws governing official conduct.

Links to these websites can be found on the LWVNYS website.

## A Membership Committee of One?

Yes, anyone can recruit new members to the League. How? Mention program meetings and voter service efforts to your friends and colleagues. Write about your League for your community newspaper. Finally, speak to other community groups about your League. If you're not an experienced speaker, learn and practice in adult education classes and your local Toastmasters club, among others.

## Domestic Violence Update!

In an important step to protect victims of domestic violence, Governor Patterson signed into law bill S.6783/A6060. This bill expands access to civil orders of protection for all victims of domestic violence, regardless of marital, parental, or blood relative status. Finally, New York joins the rest of the nation in providing these important protections. This victory marks the end of a 20 year battle, won in part because of the help of a new umbrella coalition of over 100 organizations and individuals. We especially thank Assemblywoman Weinstein, Senator Winner, and Governor Patterson for their commitment and leadership.

## League Day at the UN

This year's annual UN Day will be on Tuesday December 2, 2008. The topic will be the Effect of Global Warming on Women and Children Around the World. The schedule for the day will include a Tour of the UN and lunch in the Delegates Dining Room in addition to the main presentation.

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