

Electronic Voter Guide Available to ALL Local Leagues

The State League is committed to developing a statewide electronic voter guide – and it will be offered free to all local Leagues this summer. This program will enable your League to publish an in-depth, customized, electronic voters guide in a number of easy steps. Training will be provided at Convention – and after for those not attending Convention.

State Convention: May 20-22, 2011

The State Convention will be held at The Desmond Hotel in Albany from May 20-22, 2011. **Registration Kits have been distributed and are on the state website. Register now!** PreConvention workshops are open to all members; you don't have to be coming to Convention – just join us on Friday!

We are once again organizing a Silent Auction which will be available online and at Convention so everyone, not just attendees, can participate. Donations can still be made and forms are available by calling the state office. Watch for the posting of the items on the state website – and instructions on how to bid. Everyone can participate!

This year we are planning to sell ad space in the Awards Program to businesses and individuals as a way of raising money for the state League. We are asking members of local Leagues to sell space to local merchants, banks, and individuals. A prize will be presented to the local League that sells the largest dollar amount of ads and the local League that sells the greatest dollar amount of ads per local League member. Call the state office for more information or the Ad solicitation form.

New Way to Buy Merchandise, Donate or Join LWVNYS!

The League is pleased to announce new pages on the website to donate to the League or the Education Foundation, to join the League and to view and purchase merchandise from the LWVNYS. Take a look at our t-shirts, mugs and pins available for sale on our website. Just click on Merchandise on the left side of the homepage. You can donate or join the League from website, too!

Education Testimony

On February 15, 2011, the League submitted to the Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the 2011-2012 Executive Budget Proposal on Elementary and Secondary Education. This testimony, which was prepared by President Betsey Swan, emphasizes League positions on financing education and property taxation and calls for:

- Adding the final two years of foundation aid into the budget prior to application of the Gap Elimination Adjustment;
- Replacement of the STAR program with a STAR circuit breaker, which would provide more meaningful relief to taxpayers according to need;
- Defeat of tax caps until the state fully implements the foundation aid approach to financing education.

Lobby Training Day

Over 20 people attended our first Advocacy Training day on February 7th. We invited all Issue Specialists, Lobby Committee members and Lobby Corps members to come to Albany for the day. Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, and Sally Robinson, VP for Issues and Advocacy, provided training on our advocacy agenda and process and answered lots of questions about our issues, local advocacy, etc. The group toured the Capitol and then attended committee meetings or watched the legislative session from the gallery.

Membership – We can do it!

As expected, membership has dropped by 50% in the past 10 years. We have only one way to go...that is UP. And it can be done. Some local Leagues will join the Membership Recruitment Initiative, a national program to assist in increasing membership. All local Leagues, however, are invited to bring their best examples of recruitment ideas and membership successes to state Convention in May to share with others. Let's learn from each other and build back the strength of the League.

Youth Programs

All but 3 local Leagues have now responded to LWVNYS's youth program survey. There are several creative programs for youth that Leagues have developed. The three most popular programs are: Students Inside Albany, Vote 18, and Take Me to Vote. Results of this survey and information about all the youth programs conducted by local Leagues will be put on the state website and presented at state Convention so other Leagues may replicate the programs.

ReShapeNY

ReShapeNY, a campaign to achieve redistricting reform organized by Citizens Union, with the League and NYPIRG on the Leadership Team, was launched this month in a simultaneous announcement in Albany and New York City by its distinguished co-chairs and diverse coalition of thirty member organizations.

The campaign seeks to end partisan gerrymandering in New York State and create a fair and independent process to draw state legislative and congressional district lines in time for the 2012 elections. It is a broad-based campaign made up of 9 distinguished New Yorkers serving as co-chairs, and 30 civic, issue advocacy, business and labor organizations. The campaign will lobby legislators and engage in public education across the state to ensure redistricting reform is realized. See more at www.reshapeny.org.

1919 Society

Don't forget to include the state League in your will - and join the 1919 Society. If you already have included the League in your will, just let us know and we'll add you to the members of the Society. **Thanks to Barbara Bartoletti, Elizabeth Hubbard and Paula Blum for including the state League in their wills and joining this new Society.** As a member, their names will be engraved on a plaque in the state League office, listed in the *State Voter*, and on the website.

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