

Redistricting

With our coalition, ReShapeNY, we have continued to keep pressure on the state to enact redistricting reform in a fall special session through both testimony and through the media.

Thanks to our local Leagues in Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, Binghamton, Westchester and NYC for presenting testimony at each of the LATFOR hearings. In some cities, press conferences were also organized and attended by local members. And other local Leagues have submitted Letters to the Editors in their local newspapers. Thanks to all who helped make the League visible and active on this issue.

Voter Participation Project

The League has recently received a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation to organize a comprehensive educational project examining different means of increasing the rate of voter participation in New York, including expanding opportunities for voter registration, early in-person and absentee voting and vote by mail, and better voter education and ballot design. In this project, we are researching the effect on voter turnout of different innovations in voter registration modernization and early voting, and associated administrative issues for election officials and security concerns.

A power point presentation on the research and the issue, with supporting documents, will be available this fall for local Leagues to use at a community forum. Encourage your local League to organize a forum to present the info to members and the public.

Vote 411: Electronic Voter Guide

There are 15 local Leagues participating in the development of electronic voter guides, called Vote 411, this fall. Thanks to Christine Alexander of LWV Saratoga who has provided great assistance to the many Leagues developing this program. Some websites are already live; some will be live in the very near future. You can look for candidates listed in your area by copying this link in your browser: <http://onyourballot.vote411.org/?sfr=1315315296435>.

Students Inside Albany Conference

The Students Inside Albany Conference has been set for March 25-28, 2012. It's a bit earlier this year so local Leagues need to start recruiting students NOW. This 3 day conference provides the high school students with the skills necessary to become active citizens and lobbyists. The only cost to the local Leagues is the transportation to and from Albany – the conference is free for students.

Hydrofracking

Now that the DEC has produced its complete revision of the SGEIS (Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement) on gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing, the public has until Monday, December 12th to comment. In accordance with LWV positions on air and water quality, protection of watersheds, etc., it is critical that we identify areas that are weak or omitted and suggest appropriate revisions.

There are experts available to speak on this many different aspects of this topic, free of charge, for local Leagues. Call the state office for a list of speakers. Finally, the NY Times recently printed a Letter to the Editor from LWVNY President Betsey Swan on this topic. See a link to the letter on the state League website.

2011 Voters Guide

The 2011 Voters Guide, Part I, has also been distributed to local Leagues who ordered copies. This brochure includes information on how to register to vote, how to obtain an absentee ballot, info on the new voting machines and more. There will not be a Part II this fall as there are no statewide races and no statewide ballot proposals. Part I is also available on the state League website.

Also, on the state website is a link to the State Board of Elections website which provides a polling place look-up to confirm where a person votes and instructions on using the new voting machines.

Anyone may subscribe for \$12 a year to a paper copy of the State Voter, the state League's bimonthly newsletter; just call or email the state office.

First Vote in Spanish

First Vote, a guide to voting for new voters in NYS, has been updated, translated into Spanish and reprinted. The Spanish version is available from the state office for \$.10 each (\$10 per 100). It's a great document for high school seniors and naturalized citizens - and now for those whose first language may be Spanish.

Youth Programs

The Youth Program webpage (click on Youth programs on left side of homepage) has been updated to contain the information that was gathered from the questionnaires about local youth programs sent to all the local leagues and MAL Units. Although it is impossible to estimate the number of youths that are involved through all the local programs, at least 39 local Leagues have one or more youth programs. Ten leagues that do not have any youth programs have indicated an interest to start one and this webpage can be a starting point for them. See the many programs around the state on this page.

Youth programs are an excellent way to carry out the mission of the league in encouraging citizens to be active and informed participants in government. The descriptions of the programs from around the state are given in order to encourage Leagues to start their own. In cases like, "Take Me To Vote", where several leagues have adapted programs to fit their needs and communities, each is described. There are contact names and email addresses in order that those interested can find out more and then either follow or adapt the program.

Gifts to the League

Did you know that you can make a gift to the League, obtain a current tax advantage, and receive income for life? We offer a vehicle with which to do this through the League's pooled income fund. Within certain parameters, you can choose which level of the League to benefit. For more information, contact Betsey@lwny.org.

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