State Board Updates
January 2020

Local League To Do’s (email: lwvny@lwvny.org or call 518-465-4162)

- Participate in member-wide phone call on Feb. 13 for Day of Action on Feb. 14
- Organize meeting to discuss Constitutional Convention position update and return response form by March 1, 2020
- Return completed SIA forms by March 1
- Sign up for March Regional Training Workshops (NYC, Rochester, Binghamton and Albany) – see below
- Join us to honor former LWVNYS Legislative Director, Barbara Bartoletti on March 10

President’s Report, Suzanne Stassevitch, smstass@mac.com
January has flown by at the state League. There is always too much to do, as I am sure is also the case for local Leagues. As we galvanize our efforts to encourage people to participate in three elections in 2020, add to our education efforts about recent election reforms, support complete-count efforts with the 2020 Census, and plan annual meetings and budgets, it is time to welcome new volunteers.

With so many anxiety-producing events on the national and international stage, many people want to be engaged in something positive. I hear this a lot, as I am sure many of you do. People chatting with me about what is going on at the League - voting, the census, redistricting/gerrymandering - say they want to DO SOMETHING. With the coming of a new year, people are finally starting to commit, and they welcome my link to information about Leagues in their community.

We in the League are our best ambassadors and we need to welcome in these new volunteers who may eventually be new members. Let’s open the doors wide and bring people into the League.

We have new Members-At-Large (MAL) units forming, and that’s another opportunity in your counties to nurture new Leagues. Dare Thompson has agreed to remain the LWVNYS point person for the incubating of new Leagues. Please contact Dare or the office if you have new units that might form in your area. We will help you help them!

Executive Director: Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org

Regional Training Workshops
The League of Women Voters of NYS invites all members to come to training workshops being held throughout the state on Saturdays from 9:30-3:00 in March. All members are invited to attend any or all of the workshops. All local League board members are strongly encouraged to attend at least part of the day. Lunch will be provided and will allow for informal networking among the attendees.

Locations and Dates:
March 7, New York City, 4 West 43rd Street, New York, $35
March 14, Rochester Area, Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, 597 East Ave, Rochester, $25
March 21, Binghamton Area, Union Presbyterian Church, 200 East Main Street, Endicott, $25
March 28, Albany Area, (McKownville Methodist Church, 1565 Western Ave, Albany), $25

Topics:
9:30 Registration and Welcome
10-11 am Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Beyond Just Race: How do we include more?
11:15 to 12:15 Two workshop sessions
   Get Out the Vote: How do we get more people to vote?
   After Parkland: How to keep the youth engaged?
12:30-1:45 Lunch and networking and legislative update
2:00 – 3:00 Two workshop sessions
   Stats and Lines: Get everyone counted and represented fairly
   Hot, Hot, Hot: Attracting and engaging your community with the League

All members are welcome to register online at: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/HOhq-CqnO8wQHzms7-w8Kg or download the attached registration form and mail it in to the state office. These are a great opportunity to hear what other Leagues are doing and how you can accomplish even more!

2020 Students Inside Albany Conference
The 2020 Students Inside Albany Conference will be held May 17-20 at the Hampton Inn in downtown Albany.
The forms to be completed by the selected students and parents were emailed to youth chairs in early January; those completed forms MUST be returned to the state office by March 1 or the local League will lose their space and someone from the waiting list will be allowed to attend. If you have questions, contact Katrina@lwvny.org.

Save the Date: 2020 March Event to Honor Barbara Bartoletti
The League’s Education Foundation is hosting an event on March 10, 2020, to be held at the NYS Museum.
Barbara Bartoletti will be honored at this event for her almost 40 years as a volunteer lobbyist for the League.
The NYS Archives Partnership Trust is co-sponsoring the event with us. Liz Benjamin, former host of Capitol Tonight, will interview Barbara in an informal conversation about Barbara’s many years of service. Tickets will be available next week on our website and with an email blast to all members. Join the fun!

First Vote Booklets
The updated First Vote booklet is now being printed and will be available next week for purchase. This guide for new voters is a wonderful resource for high school students and for naturalized citizens. The updated version is available on the state website at:
https://www.lwvnyonline.org/advocacy/vote/2019/FirstVote2019_FINAL.pdf. To order copies for your local League, use the attached order form or call the state office at 518-465-4162. They are available at $30 per 100 or $28 per 100 if you use your grants management account.

Legislative Agenda
The state League produces a Legislative Agenda each year in which the main issues that will be lobbied or monitored during the upcoming legislative session are described. We have printed a limited supply of the Legislative Agendas. Call the office to place an order or use the attached order form.

New Buttons Created
LWV of Smithtown has created the new button (on left). They are in the process of getting them made and wondered if any other League would like to order some too. If you are interested, contact Judi Roth at rothhandj@yahoo.com. The more that are ordered, the cheaper they get.
Advocacy: Sally Robinson, sally.s.robinson@gmail.com and Jennifer Wilson, jennifer@lwvny.org

Constitutional Convention Position Update

At the State Convention in June, the delegates approved an update to the State League’s position on a Constitutional Convention. The purpose of this update is to determine whether there is member agreement on deleting the first sentence of the League’s 1993 Constitutional Convention position, as revised June 2015.

The first sentence to be deleted is below:
“The League of Women Voters of New York State does not support or oppose the holding of a constitutional convention.”

Attached you will find the materials for consideration by your local League of this update:
- Current Constitutional Convention Position
- Background and Other Information
- Update Form to be Returned to the State League office by March 1, 2020
- A new document with more detailed explanation of what a vote NO or a vote YES means on this position.

Individual Responses on Constitutional Convention Position Update

With the adoption by the state League Board of a new process for consensus and concurrence, individuals may now participate in these processes, such as the Con Con position update, as an individual if their local League is not participating. See the attached document for the reporting form to be completed by individuals participating. This information will be announced in the State Voter, as well as with a separate email blast; a member-wide phone call will also be available in late February so individual members may participate in a group discussion on the issue. Please let your members know.

Legislative Update

We’ve relaunched our weekly session emails to give members updates on what we are working on. It’s been a busy session so far. The Senate is moving quickly to pass voting reforms, but the Assembly hasn’t done anything related to voting yet.

This month the Governor’s budget was released and there are some appropriations for voting including $10 million for early voting, $15 million for electronic poll books, and $16 million for online voter registration. The State Board of Elections received some federal funds from HAVA for training and new equipment but no additional funds for operations. We don’t believe this will be enough funding for elections in 2020 and we have requested to testify before the Joint Legislative Committee on Public Protections on this issue.

We will also be advocating for funding for the independent redistricting commission, education, and school aid. During the February break we will be asking local Leagues to meet with their legislators to discuss these priorities. The state League is preparing a lobbying packet which will be sent out to local League leaders early next month. The packet will include advocacy materials on funding for early voting, the independent redistricting commission, ethics, and court reform. We plan to hold a call with League advocacy chairs and presidents during the first week of February.

National Day of Action

In celebration of their 100th anniversary National has asked all Leagues to participate in a day of action on Feb 14th. Because this is right at the start of the February break, we will be asking members to help us advocate for funding for voting in the budget. We will be holding a member wide call on Feb 13th to discuss what actions can be taken by individuals on the 14th to advocate for funding. We have created an advocacy toolkit that
includes social media graphics, a call script, a sample emails, and other outreach materials. This packet is available at this link: http://bit.ly/37Ho3LO. We will continue to add more material to this toolkit as we approach Feb 14th.

Independent Redistricting Commission
The League sent a letter to all members of the state legislature reminding them of them of the February 1st deadline to form New York’s first independent redistricting commission. We are continuing to monitor the process of the commission and will keep members updated about any action taken in February.

Voter Services: Judie Gorenstein, judieL728@aol.com

Vote 411
Good news! LWVUS has informed us that Vote 411 will be live with the presidential primary candidates in NYS by March 31 at the latest! This shows you how all New Yorkers benefit from Vote 411 even if your local League doesn’t organize your races.

Recently an email was sent out from the state office about Vote411 and asking local Leagues to contribute $50 (or more if possible) to participate in Vote 411. The state League will continue to provide training to members (new or past organizers of Vote 411) and provide marketing tips and tools to advertise the site. If you are interested in participating in Vote 411 this year, please email Jennifer@lwvny.org and the state League will invoice your League $50 and Jennifer will provide you with your League’s login and password. Let’s all help educate all voters on their races and candidates.

Working Together To Get Out The Vote
The LWVNYS Voter Service Committee is pleased to have begun a new outreach initiative to Get Out The Vote. A designated member of our committee will be a liaison to each local League throughout the year. The first phone call to all voter service chairs will be made before February 1.

Goals of this first contact are to:
1. Begin establishing a working relationship so you have someone to contact with not only concerns and questions but to share your successes. (Experienced VS chairs may have less questions and more ideas to share.)
2. Discuss new Election Law reforms and any questions you may have.
4. Discuss update on Vote 411
5. Get Out The Vote. Now is the time to start.

It is more important than ever that we all work together and speak with one voice. We are aware that the tasks of voter service chairs can be overwhelming especially this year with Election Law reforms and a shortened period between now and the primaries.

Presidential Primary  April 28, 2020
   Early Voting  April 18 - April 26
   Deadline for Voter Registration  April 3 in person and postmarked
   Applications for Absentee Ballot  April 21 postmarked; April 27 in person

Congressional Primaries  June 23, 2020
   Early Voting  June 13 - June 21
   Deadline for Voter Registration  May 29 in person and postmarked
   Application for Absentee Ballot  June 16 postmarked; June 22 in person

General Election  November 3, 2020
   Early Voting  October, 24 - November 1
   Deadline for Voter Registration  October 9 in person and postmarked
Application for Absentee Ballot   October 27 postmarked; November 2 in person

We know that everyone is striving to do their best and maintain high gold standards of not only being knowledgeable, but being nonpartisan. We have always done and will continue to do a great job in registering and educating voters. This year our emphasis will be to get out the vote. We are hopeful our new initiative will help us help you. Together we can accomplish our goals!

**Party Enrollment Change Deadline is February 14**
Voters may change their party enrollment up until February 14th this year. Any change made by February 14 will take effect for the presidential primary in April AND the June federal and state primary. Anyone who changes their party on or after February 15th won’t be able to have their party change updated until after the June primary. The state League provided some flyers to post across your county and social media graphics. Two are attached here but if you’d like more, contact Jennifer@lwvny.org. I’ve also attached one created by LWV of Albany County as a great example of a local-specific poster.

**New Voter Registration Forms**
The new registration forms with the option to allow 16 and 17 years old to pre-register has been printed and should be available at your local board of elections office.

We have heard from the state board of elections that some local Leagues have been sending the completed forms to the State Board of Elections office after naturalization ceremonies. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU SEND COMPLETED FORMS TO THE VOTER’S COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS OFFICE. Forms that are sent to the state office may be delayed and can cause voters to miss the registration deadline as we get closer to the April primary. We’re sure this was an honest mistake but we want to make sure these voters have their registration done in time so please keep this in mind and make sure your volunteers are also aware of this.

For a full list of county board of elections addresses and phone numbers click here:
https://www.elections.ny.gov/CountyBoards.html

**Diversity, Inclusion and Equity: Regina Tillman, rmt371@live.com**
As the new year begins in earnest, time to swing back to the planning mentioned in the introduction to DEI in the September 2019 LWVNYS Newsletter. We spoke then of forming a state-wide DEI Task Force in order to develop the first LWVNYS Action Plan for DEI and to conduct follow-up evaluations. Much of that planning will entail obtaining results from the field, while also aiding the field in their own implementation of a DEI plan. Thus, as you begin to identify who in your local Leagues will be attending the LWVNYS Regional Trainings this March, please also include the person who you might ultimately select as your LWVNYS DEI Task Force Representative.

The initial criteria:
A Membership or Nominations Chairperson, or…
An At-Large Board Member wanting to develop themselves by connecting to a specific task, or…
An Advocacy Committee Chairperson or Lead.

Essentially, we look for someone in the position of heightened awareness of the community your chapter exists within, while in a leadership position. This allows the designated individual to participate in Task Force meetings with the authority to speak for the local League, as well as to make decisions within the Task Force. In February, we will share with you our articulation as to the basic expectations of participation in terms of time and effort.
In the meantime, are you incorporating a **DEI Lens** to your local February 14th “Day of Action” Planning? From LWVUS, here is a brief outline of elements to consider: [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/deilens.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/deilens.pdf)

On the same page yet!? For our collective awareness, please review these LWVUS definitions for DEI:

**Diversity**: Includes all the similarities and differences among people; Refers to population groups that have been historically underrepresented in socially, politically, or economically powerful institutions and organizations; A team can be diverse and so can an organization, *but a person is not diverse.*

**Equity**: An approach *based in fairness* to ensuring everyone is given equal opportunity; This means that resources may be divided and shared unequally to make sure that each person has a fair chance to succeed.

**Inclusion**: Refers to the degree to which individuals from diverse backgrounds can participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group; *Being aware of unconscious or implicit bias* can help organizations better address issues of inclusivity.