Advocacy Call & Parolee Voting Restoration Call  
May 8th 2018, 7:30 PM

Parolee Voting Rights Restoration

- In April the Governor announced an Executive order that he was passing which he claimed would restore parolee’s right to vote.
  - In the past the League was not sure if we had a position to work on this issue but this year we had revisited the issue and decided based on the actions of other states NYS could support the reform.
  - We were excited to start working on the issue and surprised to see the Executive Order.
- Although we are happy the Governor is taking the initiative on this, this reform is not enough to truly restore parolee’s right to vote.
  - This reform includes a case by case review process that will be undertaken by the Executive office. The Governor will decide which individuals released on parole will qualify.
  - This reform will also require a wait period between the release of the list of parolees to the Governor’s office and the signing of the commutations by the Governor (a commutation is a partial pardon).
  - There are no clear guidelines as to how or when the Governor will sign these commutations. There are also no clear deadlines as to when parolees' voting right will actually be restored. We are fearful that there will not be an adequate mechanism in place to alert parolees when their right has been restored. A lag between the time in which the commutation is signed and a parolee re-registered has the potential to prevent some parolees from exercising their opportunity to vote.
- The Assembly and Senate have their own legislative proposal that would restore parolee’s right to vote AND mandate that all jails and prisons inform those leaving jail or prison that their right has been restored. They must also present individuals with voting registration forms. (Bill number: A5367/S0960)
  - The Assembly has moved this bill through committee but has not yet taken it up on the floor.
  - The Senate will be a much harder lift because of the opposition the Executive order has received by majority leader Flanagan.

Continued Advocacy for 2018/Lobby Day Recap

- Thank you to all who attended lobby day! We have been slowly getting in response forms from Local Leagues. Please remind whoever in your League lobby group is submitting that form to do so asap.
  - All materials from the lobby day have been posted on the web site under Local League Resources – Lobby Day.
- Now that the second half of session has begun we are honing in our efforts on ethics and voting reforms.
This year we actually think some of our ethics proposals stand a chance to pass in the Senate. With many Senate Republicans retiring they seem to be more amenable to reforms on ethics.

- Database of Deals is currently on third read on the calendar in the Senate. It is in Ways & Means in the Assembly (it was reported out of Economic Development in 2017). Comptroller’s program bill is in Finance in the Senate (it advanced to third read in 2017) and in Gov't. Ops in the Assembly.

Our voting reforms are not showing as much promise but several have passed in the Assembly including early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, online voter registration, and closure of the LLC loophole.

Our coalition partner, LetNYVote, has chosen to work on a large slate of issues. We are working on these issues too but our big focus is on the Constitutional Amendment for no-excuse absentee voting.

- This reform takes a long time to be implemented and this year it has had bipartisan support in the Assembly and Senate.
  - Tomorrow I am partnering with NYCLU to conduct lobby visits with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee (where the bill is currently being held)
  - Once we complete this first step we will be trying to meet with Republican members of Senate who have introduced similar bills that are not Constitutional Amendments.

- We are encouraging members to keep an eye on our social media and email action alerts so that they can take action on some of our bigger picture issues. It’s important to still “keep the buzz” on these issues even if there isn’t a bill a chance for them to pass this year.