State Board Updates
October 2019

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

- Market early voting survey (www.nyearlyvoting.org) and distribute materials
- Join us in Buffalo on Nov. 16 to celebrate our centennial!
- Plan a local event (even informal hosting at a bar or member’s house) on Tuesday, Nov. 19, to raise a glass and celebrate the actual founding date of the state League!
- Complete and return Voter Services Survey by Nov. 20.
- Register for League Day at the United Nations (Dec. 4)
- Organize meeting to discuss Constitutional Convention position update and return response form by March 1, 2020

President’s Report: Suzanne Stassevitch, lwvnypres@lwvny.org
Three cheers! please, for the state office staff and volunteers for their tremendous efforts to produce and distribute the Early Voting materials and launch our Early Voting website. The League is providing updated information for all of New York counties. Please share our website on Early Voting with your friends that live in counties that are not connected to a local League and tell them how to access VOTE411.

And three cheers for the LWVNYS! Celebrate our 100th birthday with us in Buffalo on November 16, or raise a glass together at your local League on November 19 for the next 100 years.

DATA COLLECTION
To complete the Early Voting project, that was largely funded by a LWVUS Making Democracy Work grant, surveys of voters and polling places during Early Voting are being collected to GIVE US THE DATA to tell the stories, mission impact, about Early Voting and the information we provided and how the BOE plans worked.

Collecting the data for our work (voter registration, GOTV, education materials distributed) is critical for effective fundraising and telling our stories; be it individual donors or foundations. I urge to fill out the surveys on your voter service activities and priorities whenever you receive them from the state office and use that same information for your own fundraising events.

DEVELOPMENT
Another component of our LWVUS grant includes fundraising. LWVUS has created some fundraising training modules to help all of us become better at telling our stories and building our donor base. You can access the Fundraising Modules on the LWVUS League Management website. You could get together with your fundraising team, or put together a fundraising team, and have a coffee, tea, wine and watch the first 3 modules. We are entering the final phase of fundraising for the year with annual appeals and year end appeals. Don’t be afraid to ask a friend to support your work as you probably support theirs.
Executive Director: Laura Ladd Bierman, Laura@lwvny.org

Early Voting – Oct. 26 to Nov. 3

Early voting has begun – and all is going smoothly so far at least from what we have heard. Please share the early voting survey widely with friends, co-workers, family and other organizations you belong to: http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07egobxmplk1w7p2wx/start. We want as many completed surveys as possible. We have received lots of media coverage of our efforts to educate the public about early voting. Please share with us any articles, links to TV or radio, etc, from your area.

League Day at the United Nations: Climate Change

The state League is again organizing its Day at the United Nations. On December 4, 2019, we have arranged for tours of the UN facility, lunch in the Delegates’ Dining Room and briefings by UN experts on the topic of Climate Change. The cost is $120 for the day which we do understand is expensive, but this barely covers the costs for the day. We also have a bus coming to and from Albany for an additional $50 for those upstate who would like to join us! The registration form is attached – please share and encourage all to attend this fascinating day. Registration form is attached or people can register online at: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/INvmPPc4Hpebf0PLNzaRnw. A bus is available from Albany with a stop near Poughkeepsie for an additional cost.

State League’s Centennial Celebration: November 16 in Buffalo

On November 16, 2019, the League of Women Voters of NYS will be 100 years old and the League’s Education Foundation is hosting our 100th Anniversary Celebration at The Buffalo History Museum! The Buffalo History Museum is a generous co-sponsor of our event and will have a suffrage exhibit at this time.

At the celebration, we are thrilled to be honoring:

- Kathleen Hochul, Lt. Governor of New York State
- William Hochul, Jr., Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary to Delaware North Companies,
- Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, President, SUNY Buffalo State,
- Alice Jacobs, President, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, and
- Ariel Palitz, Senior Executive Director, Office of Nightlife, NYC Mayor’s Office of Media & Entertainment

Tickets are available online at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/aY3kqvJsaRqbkTngBE-iQg or by calling the state League office at 518-465-4162. Please share with all members, friends and family.

- $100 Centennial Ticket
- $150 Silver Ticket (name listed in program)
- $200 Gold Ticket (name listed in program and on website)

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

**Campaign Finance Reform**
The League has been working with the Fair Elections coalition and our good government partners to ensure that the Public Campaign Financing Commission proposes comprehensive reforms that will get dark money out of elections. This month, we signed onto a letter to the Commissioners asking them to release their interim recommendations in the first week of December. We asked that they uphold a minimum standard in their recommendations and ensure a 6 to 1 match, a reduction in contribution limits, and the creation of an independent oversight agency to oversee the program. You can read our full letter [here](https://campaignfinancereform.ny.gov/). On October 22nd, Michelle Lamberti of LWV of Port Washington/Manhasset testified in the hearing on Long Island (Lisa Scott also submitted testimony) and on October 29th Janet Massaro of the LWV of Buffalo will be testifying in Buffalo. Videos from all of the hearings are posted on the Commission’s website: https://campaignfinancereform.ny.gov/. The Commission’s recommendations are due on December 1st.

**Census**
The League is continuing to work with our partners in the New York Counts 2020 coalition on educating citizens about the importance of completing their census survey. The Governor’s Complete Count Commission has released its report but have not made any firm recommendations on how to use the state’s $20 million in funding to reach hard to count communities. We are continuing to advocate for the release of this funding to community groups throughout the state. We will soon be sharing with Local Leagues educational materials to use for their own census outreach.

**Medical Aid in Dying**
One reform that was not passed in 2019 was allowing for physician assisted suicide for those dying from terminal diseases. The State League adopted its medical aid in dying position in 2018 and began advocating for the reform that same year. This month, the League sent a letter to Governor Cuomo urging him to make the reform a priority in 2020. The Wall Street Journal covered the topic and the League’s letter is mentioned in the column attached. We will continue to advocate for medical aid in dying in the coming legislative session.

**Court Reform**
Following New York’s Chief Judge Janet DiFiore’s proposal to restructure New York’s court system, the League has joined the Campaign for Court Simplification working to consolidate the eleven separate trial courts into a single court. The League will be testifying at a Joint Legislative Hearing on Court Simplification in November. More information on our efforts within this coalition will be available soon. You can learn more about the coalition [here](https://campaignfinancereform.ny.gov/).

**Redistricting**
One of the most exciting projects the League is working on is our joint campaign with LWVUS on redistricting reform. This month, Jennifer traveled to DC for a training conference on National’s People Powered Fair Maps campaign. This brand-new campaign will be kicked off in New York later this month. Stay tuned for updates.

**Voter Services: Judie Gorenstein, judi728@aol.com**
With Early Voting beginning this weekend for the first time in NY and with Election Day Nov. 5, 2019 less than two weeks away, LWVNYS and local Leagues, MALS, and ILOs throughout the state are continuing to do whatever they can to engage and educate voters to Get Out The Vote.

**Congratulations to local leagues, who over the past months:**
- Organized and ran successful voter registration drives and hopefully have gathered contact information on voters to follow up with reminders to vote.
- Collected information and then distributed Early Voting brochures – with one League requesting 17,000 brochures to distribute to over 200 sites,
- Contacted local candidates to provide answers for Vote 411.
- Organized and ran successful candidate forums and when necessary publicized when and why they were cancelled.
- Participated in Voter Service teleconference on Oct.19 where Early Voting and GOTV were major topics.

Over the past months, LWVNYS has been busy too:

- Created and distributed over 100,000 Early Voting brochures to local Leagues, MALS and ILOs. Created a page on the website where voters can find information and their own early voting poll site.
- Coordinated efforts with LWVUS and local leagues to get VOTE 411 up and running.
- Created/updated the following materials that were emailed to all leagues and can be downloaded from the LWVNYS website’s homepage (scroll down to ‘League Communication’):
  - **NEW:** Get Out The Vote Toolkit (Samples and Examples)
  - Toolkit for Candidate Events (Samples and Examples)
  - Toolkit for Voter Registration Drives (Samples and Examples)
  - 2019 Guidelines for Candidate Events
  - First Vote, A Guide for New Voters in NYS
  - Your Right to Vote in New York - series of brochures (soon to be on the Website)
- Made significant additions and improvements to LWVNYS website.
- Held Voter Service teleconference where 25 participants shared more good ideas.
- Created and distributed surveys for both Early Voting - to be completed by those voters who do vote early - and the 2019 Voter Service Survey to be completed by all local leagues, ILOs and MALS.

With less than two weeks before Election Day, there is still work to be done:

- Local leagues can ask volunteers to go to Early Voting poll sites to ask voters to complete the brief survey, attached.
- Local leagues can follow through on any Get Out The Vote events or contacts they have planned. Leagues can also try any new ideas they may have to GOTV.
- Lastly, leagues, ILOs and MALs need to complete and return the 2019 Voter Service Survey which is also attached. These surveys will give us quantifiable information and data which will be used in measuring our efforts and effectiveness over the next five years.

LWVNYS will compile information from both the Early Voting Survey and Voter Service Survey and, as always, share information collected and incorporate into improvements for 2020.

**Complete and return the Voter Service Survey (one response per local League) by November 20** (paper version attached) or online at: [https://forms.gle/wEUKWcfwdGx1Zr116](https://forms.gle/wEUKWcfwdGx1Zr116). Boast about all the hard work you’ve done this summer and fall to engage and educate the public on voting!

The LWVNYS Voter Service Committee thanks everyone for all their dedication and commitment to engaging, educating and then turning out voters. Together we can and will make a difference!!

**Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI): Regina Tillman, rmt370@gmail.com**

While the League Presidents begin to consider who they will nominate to be their representative on our State-wide Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), we can begin to get clarity on what we are referring to when we use these terms. There is a sizeable body of information and research available to tap into in order to define your local DEI status, and to create your local DEI Action Plans.
A place to begin? The LWVUS has done an admirable job in gathering references from those with experience in defining and acting upon the subject of DEI. I recommend that those interested in creating a more diverse league begin with the definitions posted on the LWVUS/Diversity webpage: https://www.lwv.org/league-management/diversity-equity-inclusion/diversity-equity-and-inclusion

Then, as time allows, begin to listen the webinars archived at: https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/lwv-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-webinars A “listening party” could bring in other interested members and only requires scheduling in a facility with wifi. Within a group, regardless of its size, it is likely that members will discuss the webinar content together and thus, jointly broaden their perspectives and share new ideas.

When describing what characteristics your local league wishes to change about its membership base in order to put the diversity policy into practice, it’s good to have points of reference so your efforts are directed in the most effective direction. For example, what do you mean when saying you want a more diverse league? As cited in an article entitled, Effective Diversity Management Initiatives (International Review of Management and Marketing, Vol. 3. No. 2., 2013): “Generally, researchers define diversity characteristics into four areas; personality (e.g., traits, skills, and abilities), internal characteristics (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, intelligence, sexual orientation), external characteristics (e.g., culture, nationality, religion, marital or parental status), and organizational characteristics (e.g., [profession], position, department, union/nonunion).”

Beginning with the end in mind and considering your surrounding community, what will your league membership look like, in both visible and invisible characteristics, when your DEI plan is realized? Imagine. Then, discuss with your Board and in other relevant committees as your own first step toward helping your league to develop its local DEI Action Plan.

League Centennial Celebrations and Women’s Suffrage History
PLEASE POST YOUR CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES ON THE LWVNYS WEBSITE! Barb Thomas (Saratoga) and Joan Johnson (Syracuse) chair our 100th Anniversary Events Committee and encourage us all to share what we’re doing and pick up some new ideas at https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/programs/celebrating-our-100th-anniversaries Let’s celebrate our past and future with gratitude and fun.

You’ll also find a toolkit on the LWVUS site at https://www.lwv.org/league-management/guides/100th-anniversary-activities-leagues. We waited so long for 2020 and omigosh, it's finally almost here. Don't miss the opportunities it presents.

From LWVUS
As LWVUS program planning time is quickly descending upon us, we wanted to make certain that all League members are aware of the board-recommended concurrence on Electoral Systems that will be voted on at 2020 convention. We were directed by the LWVUS Board to handle outreach for this pilot project (originally announced by the Board last fall). We are beginning that outreach now with some general information below to remind you to include this in your program planning.

In addition, we are including the links to the concurrence info on the LWVUS website and we are attaching the background for the concurrence to this post.

LWVUS Voter Representation/Electoral Systems Concurrence
General Information
Most important to understand is that this concurrence pilot project is NOT a study; traditional study steps are not necessary. This proposed concurrence is based on the language of many comprehensive LWV state and local studies.
The LWVUS has already voted to recommend / support this concurrence.

Some of the language in the position may be new to members who didn’t have an opportunity to participate in a formal study. We provided the following materials to help members understand the terminology, how and why this concurrence was developed, how the electoral process impacts voter representation and how the position can be used. To that end, we hope that all League Leaders will share for review, the following items now posted on the LWVUS website (specific links below).

- Concurrence language (which LWVUS says cannot be edited)
- Background attached here. (Not yet posted on the LWVUS website)
- Updated Terminology
- Pro/Cons

For those leagues without their own related positions, it would be great to have a member meeting or board meeting to review these materials, and offer a chance to ask questions. We can be available by phone (both our emails and phone numbers are below). We are here to answer questions or help in whatever way possible. Additional guidance regarding program planning will come out this fall, following the usual timeline. However, the LWVUS Board is excited to share that they voted to recommend this concurrence on electoral systems process in advance.

We hope you will make note of your League’s support as well on the LWVUS program planning forms due March 1st.

Looking forward to celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the League of Women Voters in June 2020 with a position on how we elect our representatives.

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