

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
VOTER

September 2023

THE PROCESS OF POLICE REFORM
IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

BY

ELIZABETH BOJSZA

A COMMISSIONER OF SUFFOLK HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
AND MEMBER OF THE ITS CIVILIAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12
7 PM ON ZOOM

To LWV-B Members – Zoom link will be sent on Oct. 9
To nonmembers – call Nancy, 730-6556 to register and
receive a zoom link

President's Page

As Election Day draws closer, we have offered information to potential voters about how to register and vote at the Naturalization Ceremonies in Central Islip; we will celebrate National Voter Registration Day on September 19 at the Sayville, Longwood, South Country Libraries, and St. Joseph College, had information at the International Peace Day in Sayville on September 21, and at Port Jefferson Station Fun Day on September 30.

Early voting will start on October 28, continuing until November 5 before Election Day, which will be on November 7. This year in Brookhaven we are voting for candidates for Suffolk County Executive, Brookhaven Town Supervisor, each of the eighteen county legislators, and Town Council Members, Tax Assessor, Sixth District Court Judge, and Highway Superintendent. (The Brookhaven VOTER in August listed the individual candidates for these positions. If you would like to receive a copy, please let me know at nancypmarr@gmail.com).

AFTER REGISTERING VOTERS, WE WILL WORK TO GOTV?

A MESSAGE FROM NANCY ROSENTHAL, NEW PRESIDENT OF LWV-NYS

GOTV stands for "get out the vote" and signifies a concerted effort to register voters, educate voters about their ballots and increase voter turnout during elections. As Leaguers we know democracy is more resilient the more people are engaged with it and see themselves as agents of change in their own lives and communities. League remains one of the few nonpartisan, grassroots organizations engaging others to create change. Our work both strengthens our democracy now and makes it more resilient for the future. And we do all of this by building relationships within our communities, listening to what our communities care about.

OUR NEXT BOOK GROUP – ON SEPTEMBER 28, AT 1 PM

We will be talking about Matthew Desmond's new book, *POVERTY BY AMERICA*.

This follows Desmond's recent book, *EVICTED*, and presents his view of the role played by our government and society to make it difficult to empower the poor by giving everybody a chance. Contact Betsy Gaidry (tbgaidry@optonline.net) to reserve a place or get directions. ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

OCTOBER 12 – 7 PM – ON ZOOM

Suffolk County Human Rights Commission Role in Police Reform

During 2021, following a directive from Governor Cuomo, counties reviewed their police policies and procedures to decide what reforms were necessary. In Suffolk, the County Executive appointed a large task force which held meetings in all parts of the county, with listening sessions for the community and input from key stakeholder groups. It sought to develop a comprehensive policing plan to support safe, effective and equitable policing. A critical area for the counties was how citizens with complaints about police action could get them redressed. The Suffolk Task Force expanded the channels that civilians may use to complaints, and created a review process that includes Suffolk Human Rights Commission professional investigators and voluntary commissioners serving on the Committee for the Administration of Justice.

Elizabeth Bojsa, a member of the Committee for the Administration of Justice for the Commission, will be our guest on October 12 and will describe the process of civilian review.

ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS—ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS

On October 3, 2023 at 7pm, join the League of Women Voters of New York State, Beyond Plastics, and Bedford 2030 on Zoom for a conversation about endocrine disruptors with John Peterson 'Pete' Myers, Ph.D., CEO and Chief Scientist of Environmental Health Sciences, New York State Senator Pete Harckham, Chair of the New York Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, and Megan Wolff, Ph.D., MPH, Policy Director at Beyond Plastics. People may be exposed to endocrine disrupting chemicals through everyday food and beverages consumed, pesticides applied, and cosmetics used. Endocrine disruptors can decrease or increase normal hormone levels or alter the natural production of hormones in the body. Even low doses of endocrine-disrupting chemicals may be unsafe. The body's normal endocrine functioning involves very small changes in hormone levels, yet we know even these small changes can cause significant developmental and biological effects. [Click here](#) to register.

DEMOCRACY AT WORK: Will Teens Become Voters?

by Nancy Marr

Voting is a fundamental act of civic participation. It is one important way that young people can engage in civic life. It is also a powerful way that young people can make their voices heard and have an impact on issues that affect them.

Historically young people have voted at lower rates than older adults, but that is beginning to change. To understand the changes, we studied a survey of students from five Suffolk school districts. The sample of students who returned the survey gives us some idea also of what strategies might work to increase their engagement.

Of the 242 surveys returned, 36.4% reported that they had already registered. Of these, the largest percentage, 51.5% had registered in school and 25.7% had registered at the DMV. Moreover, of those not already registered, 64% reported that they plan to register by the time they are 18. and know how and where to register.

When asked whether they have a plan for voting, 79.3% reported that they are most likely to cast their vote on Election Day at their polling place, probably continuing a practice they learned from their family, 8.7% expect to use an absentee ballot and 23% plan to vote during early voting.

Concerns with national issues were interesting; the survey form asked them to choose five, and offered 17 possibilities. Most students chose the economy, followed by gun control Next came inflation, environment, racial inequality and abortion. The other choices offered (each selected by smaller numbers of students) were economic inequality, jobs, foreign policy, health and covid, mental health, immigration, women's right to choose, education, democracy at risk, and health insurance.

Of the 237 students who answered the question of whether they have registered or would register for a political party, 38.4% said yes, 21.9% said no, and 39.7% were unsure. Asked if they considered themselves to be politically engaged or politically active, 26.4% said they did. Only 15.8% had attended a political rally or demonstration.

The 242 students (as self-described) were a diverse group.

Age – 53% 17 years old, 25% 18, 15% 20, 6.1% 19

Race -- 32% Hispanic, 26% white/Caucasian, 19% mixed race, 8% African American, 7% Asian, 2% Native American

Language-- 65% English, 25% Spanish, 6% Other

Gender-- 52% Female, 46% Male, 1.5% Non-binary, 0.5%Queer

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WILL TEENS BECOME VOTERS ?

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Many youth are themselves concerned about the low turnout. Ruby Belle Booth, a member of the Circle Program (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) at Tufts College, hosted a podcast called “Why Gen-Z Activism Isn’t Reflected in Voter Turnout” produced by radio station KALW, in California. “Although 23% of youth are voting at higher levels than in the past, they are voting at a lower percentage than that of older groups.” She added, “that means that over 75% did not vote. Are they politically disengaged, overwhelmed by the voting process, lazy?”

She found that in states, like California, which has made voting convenient, the turnout is higher. Policies like automatic voting or same day registration, online voter registration and vote by mail all help young people vote. Efforts by schools to register and preregister students provide information to help voters find their way.

In addition to logistics, a huge barrier is lack of confidence. Research has shown that over half of young people, 18 to 29, do not feel they are qualified to make decisions about candidates, especially when they don’t trust the system or feel the candidates are not qualified, or believe that the parties are not addressing their concerns, particularly in local elections.

The Circle Program research recommends that we make the process of voting an integral part of the educational curriculum for students from K-12 through college. By creating civic engagement opportunities for young people in school, in local youth advisory councils, we can help Gen-Z turn into a generation of future voters.

Before Election Day this year, let first time voters know they can register through October 28, and find out about their races and candidates from the League of Women Voters’ Vote411.org and other organizations (Voter Hub, run by Gen-Z for Change on Tik-Tok and VoteNow).

631-862-6860. *Nancy Marr is Vice-President of the League of Women Voters of Suffolk County, a nonprofit nonpartisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Visit www.suffolkcounty.org or call*

PRESIDENT BIDEN ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR A NEW AMERICAN CLIMATE CORPS

On a week when tens of thousands of people took to the streets ahead of the United Nations General Assembly to renew calls for climate action, President Joe Biden revived one of the most popular platforms of his original plan for tackling the crisis.

The White House announced Wednesday it was launching the American Climate Corps, seeking to put more than 20,000 young people to work in clean energy and climate resilience jobs, particularly in communities of color.

As a candidate in 2020, Biden pledged to create such a New Deal-style public works program as an integral part of his “Build Back Better” program of tackling the struggling economy and climate change at the same time. But his original \$2 trillion agenda had to be greatly scaled back to make it through Congress.

A provision for a \$10 billion Civilian Climate Corps was jettisoned on the way to what became Biden’s signature climate legislation last year, the Inflation Reduction Act, known as the IRA. Although all of the details were not immediately available—including total anticipated funding— Biden’s new American Climate Corps appears to pull together workplace development funding that has been scattered throughout previous legislation, including the record \$370 billion spending on the clean energy transition included in the IRA. For example, the Department of Energy’s existing Career Skills Training Program announced a new \$10 million in grants for students to receive classroom instruction and on-the-job training for certification in installing energy efficient building technologies.

And the AmeriCorps community service program, which marks its 30th anniversary this year, launched a five-year, \$15 million initiative with the U.S. Forest Service to engage young adults in wildland fire prevention, reforestation and other natural and cultural resource management projects. The program is expected to employ 80 people aged 18-26, providing them with compensation packages equivalent to \$15 an hour, including lodging, transportation and other benefits.

Other areas where the White House aims to deploy Climate Corps participants are “bolstering community resilience, deploying clean energy...and advancing environmental justice,” the White House said in a prepared release.

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The Biden administration also is relying on states and the private sector to round out the Climate Corps. In addition to the five states that already had their own Climate Corps programs—California, Colorado, Maine, Michigan and Washington. The White House announced that five new states ---Arizona, Utah, Minnesota, North Carolina and Maryland—were moving forward with state-based climate corps funded through public-private partnerships.

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Polling released this year by the progressive think tank Data For Progress showed that a public works climate program remained broadly popular, supported by 88 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of Independents. And more Republicans (42 percent) supported a Civilian Climate Corps than opposed it (41 percent), with 16 percent unsure.

Earlier this week, the two members of Congress most associated with the Green New Deal and other progressive climate action ideas, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.), sent a letter to Biden urging him to use executive authority to establish a climate corps. Biden decided to do exactly that, drawing on existing funding and legal authority Congress already has given to agencies. That could make the American Climate Corps difficult for foes to challenge, unless they show the new climate efforts overstepped that authority. The agencies, the Agriculture, Energy, Interior and Labor Departments, AmeriCorps and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, will collaborate in putting the American Climate Corps into action.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKHAVEN
POST OFFICE BOX 92
SETAUKET, NEW YORK 11733

OCTOBER

Tuesday OCTOBER 2 LWV-BROOKHAVEN BOARD MEETING, 9:30, ZOOM

THURSDAY OCTOBER 12 PROCESS OF POLICE REFORM IN SUFFOLK COUNTY
7 PM. ON ZOOM

*The following items in italic are not League programs, but are candidate meetings
to present the candidates running in the election on November 7.*

Monday OCTOBER 2 *Setauket Civic Association at Setauket Fire House, 7 pm*

Tuesday OCTOBER 10 *AARP NY, WABC, SCHNEPS MEDIA
Suffolk County Executive Candidate Forum, 6:30-8:30
At Stony Brook University, Wang Center*

Monday OCTOBER 16 *Smithtown Candidates, Kings Park High School, 7 pm*

Tuesday OCTOBER 17 *Farmingville Resident Association, at
Main Farmingville Firehouse, 7 pm*

*The Civic Associations usually invite all candidates running in the election – county
executive, town supervisor, town clerk, councilmen, and county legislators*
