

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKHAVEN
VOTER
MAY 2024

ANNUAL MEETING - 2024

The meeting date has been changed to

June 18, Tuesday, 7 pm

At the Longwood Library
In the Clemens Room
800 Middle Country Road
Middle Island
631 924 6400

If you are enrolled in the Democratic party, don't forget to vote in the primary to choose the candidate who will run against Nicholas LaLota for the congressional seat in CD1 on June 25. Early voting will begin on June 15 and end on June 25.

ANNUAL REPORTS – 2023-2024

This year, we discussed many important issues, some concerning the election in November.

SEPTEMBER – Police Reform in Suffolk County – presented by Elizabeth Bojsza, from Suffolk Human Rights Commission

OCTOBER – Introduction to Better Angels -presented by Herb Lape

NOVEMBER – NYS ERA – presented by Betsy Gaidry and committee

DECEMBER – THE FOURTEENTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – presented by Jean Baker and Anthony Parlatore, Esq.

JANUARY – HOW DOES LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING AFFECT US HEALTH OUTCOMES?
Presented by Janet Sklar and August Ruckdeschel, Suffolk County Cooperative Extension

FEBRUARY – IMMIGRATION – Presented by Jose Hernandez from Huntington Library

APRIL – HOW CAN WE GET OUT THE VOTE – Presented by Voter Service Chairperson Carole Huston

MAY – NO MEMBER MEETING IN MAY

MEMBERSHIP

Between September 2023 and MAY 2024 many new members joined our League, due in part to the efforts of our Treasurer, Janet Sklar, to join IATS, which makes it possible to pay our dues on line. In October, we decided to plan in-person meetings, instead of zoom, and we were pleased that our attendance increased, and we met new members. We were fortunate to be able to rely on Zoom during the pandemic, which allowed us to reach members throughout the town and in the evening. We realized, however, that not all our members joined us on zoom, and we hope to continue with in-person meetings at libraries and other venues.

BOOK GROUP - BETSY GAIDRY

During the year, we met every other month, depending on our schedules. We read:

SEPTEMBER – **POVERTY BY AMERICA**, BY Matthew Desmond

NOVEMBER – **MASTER, SLAVE, HUSBAND, WIFE**, by Ilyan Woo

JANUARY – **DIFFER WE MUST – HOW LINCOLN SUCCEEDED IN A DIVIDED AMERICA**, By Steven Inskeep

MARCH – **LINCOLN AND THE FIGHT FOR PEACE**, By John Avlon

MAY - **EVERYONE WHO IS GONE IS HERE**, By Jonathan Blitzer

Annual Report: Voter Service and Education 2024

Carole Huston, Chair, Voter Service and Education

For 2024, we determined that the emphasis would be on reaching voters through different sources such as Food Banks and Health Vans. We have also continued our presence at libraries, assisted-living homes, and civic events.

The places we have been are:

Patchogue Library Learn and Practice English Class Patchogue Library

Longwood Library Family Wellness Fair

Bellport Food Pantry

Comsewogue Library

Bright View Assisted Living

William Floyd Family Center, MMS Library, Intermediate Language Class William Floyd Citizenship Class

Food Van, Middle Country Library (and inside)

Rocky Point Day

Juneteenth Day

Comsewogue Library

Patchogue Library

Catholic Health Van

Sayville Library

Summer Reading Program Kick-Off

Brookhaven County Fair Longwood Estates

We will continue to plan venues especially on September 17, National Voter Registration Day. This will include the colleges. We are collecting voter data on which areas are having less turnout and will use that to schedule places. I have accessed the Voter Activation Network for this information. Members are very quick to join in these various efforts, and I expect the rest of the year before the election to be increasingly active.

Thanks to all the members and friends who worked at each of these venues.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE NATURALIZATION COMMITTEE

The following members attended naturalization ceremonies at the Federal Court in Central Islip to help new citizens register to vote. Many members attended multiple times.

They received and submitted 1,021 registration forms from Suffolk, Nassau, and Queens.

Thank you to all members who helped.

Judi Bird, Chair of Naturalization
and Environment Committee

Nancy Arthur

Carol Gavin

Judi Bird

Carole Huston

Pat Bollerman

Barbara Jordan

Stephanie Byrne

Joan Keily

Dorothy Callahan

Elise Nicolls-Powell

Marie Capo

Cathy Penna

Linda Devin-Sheehan

Lisa Scott

Linda Steffens

OUR LEAGUE EXTENDS OUR SYMPATHIES

to

*the family of Barbara and Al Jordan for the passing of their son David
and the family and friends of Joyce Edward.*

Our thoughts are with you.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

FOR TWO YEARS (2024-2026)

VICE-PRESIDENT	CAROL GAVIN
TREASURER	JANET SKLAR
DIRECTOR	BETSY GAIDRY
DIRECTOR	CAROLE HUSTON
DIRECTOR	ELIZABETH GARDINER
DIRECTOR	JOAN KEILY

Presented by Nominating Committee
Joan Nickeson, Chairperson
Carolyn Sackstein, Member

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS WHOSE TERMS WILL END IN 2025

PRESIDENT	NANCY MARR
RECORDING SECRETARY	LINDA DEVIN-SHEEHAN
DIRECTOR	JUDI BIRD
DIRECTOR	JEANNE SOMMER

OUR OFF-BOARD MEMBERS ARE JOAN NICKESON, PEGGY OLNESS, ALICE D'AMICO, JEAN BAKER

LOCAL LEAGUE PROGRAM AND POSITIONS

TOWN PLANNING

Support for continuous land use planning in the town of Brookhaven with intergovernmental cooperation and citizen participation in order to provide for the orderly development and preservation of essential natural resources.

Support for a citizen advisory committee on environmental quality. Support for conservation and controlled use of open space.

HOUSING

Support for measures that ensure a variety of safe, sanitary and affordable housing for all the residents of the town of Brookhaven. Support for a requirement that a percentage of units in housing developments be affordable.

Support for an effective housing code with adequate enforcement by qualified personnel.

Support for a town Housing Authority and Town participation in public and private funding for programs for housing and community development

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Support for measures that promote equitable, effective, economical services to residents of the town.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS

Action in support of Council Districts

PESTICIDES

Action on pesticide use and alternatives to pesticides in school and other public places.

TRANSPORTATION

Support for a transportation plan that provides public transportation and connections between the means of transportation through a transportation hub,

Article from *Times Beacon Record*, April 25

Making Democracy Work - Why Planned Parenthood Matters by Lisa Scott

Nancy Marr's February 2, 2024 column in this newspaper, "Equal Rights Amendment...It's Time" explains that the proposed New York State ERA (which will be on the back of the November 2024 ballot) is not "a women's equality amendment" but seeks to protect women as a class and men as a class against discrimination under the law for any reason. The NYS ERA bill explicitly includes language to clarify that discrimination based on a person's pregnancy or pregnancy outcomes would be sex discrimination, protecting pregnant people from punishment. These protections will help to guarantee that all people have the right to bodily autonomy.

One organization that has continued to fight to ensure all people have access to the care and resources they need to make informed decisions about their bodies, their lives, and their futures is Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood started in 1916 in Brownsville (Brooklyn) New York. In 1933 and 1951, communities in Westchester and Suffolk counties, respectively, were providing health services, accurate information and education, and advocacy for reproductive rights and justice. Today, these counties (with a total population of close to 3 million residents) are now joined as Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic (PPHP). *(All data in this article are as of full-year 2022.)*

PPHP now serves as a major provider of sexual and reproductive health care for the region and a leading public advocate in the suburban metro area. There are 10 health centers and 2 mobile health centers, which offer a wide range of sexual and reproductive health care services regardless of the individual's age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, or ability to pay. In 2022, PPHP provided 45,790 health care visits and served 27,017 patients throughout the 4 counties. Over half of PPHP's patients are on Medicaid and fall at or below the federal poverty line. Fees for many services are based on a sliding scale tied to income and family size.

PPHP has recently launched initiatives to bring the majority of their health services directly into communities through their mobile health centers, as well as offering expanded telehealth services as an outgrowth of challenges during the COVID pandemic. Reproductive health care cannot wait, so patients can access services such as birth control, emergency contraception, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment, HIV testing and education, PrEP and PEP for HIV prevention, gender-affirming care, and more, and access these services with fewer visits or without needing to visit a health center at all.

Every person's personal decision about their pregnancy should be respected and valued. There is widespread disinformation on Planned Parenthood's services, in particular abortion services. Contrary to popular belief, abortion is common, nearly one in four women, and more gender expansive people in America will have an abortion by age 45. 6 out of 10 people who get abortions already have kids. PPHP performed 1,993 procedure abortions and 6,238 medication abortions in 2022, but also vasectomies, colposcopies (cervical exams), HPV vaccinations, breast exams, and

pap tests. STI tests (59,530) and contraception management visits (33,199) were by far the service most in demand/provided.

PPHP is one of eight Planned Parenthood affiliates to offer prenatal care. The organization recently launched Centering Pregnancy in two of its health centers, an innovative style of group prenatal care that empowers pregnant people to be actively involved in their own care and equips them to make healthy choices throughout their pregnancy and beyond. Numerous published studies show that Centering patients have healthier babies and that Centering nearly eliminates racial disparities in preterm birth. PPHP is committed to improving maternal health outcomes and reducing maternal mortality, particularly among people of color.

We should be empowering people to make their own health and reproductive care decisions, and remind them that there is a team of health professionals at PPHP that can answer questions and address concerns with understanding and respect. And voting yes in November for the NYS ERA will take a big step to protecting a person's right to make decisions about their own bodies.

PPHP can be reached at 800-230-PLAN or visit pphp.org.

Lisa Scott is 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. For more information, visit <https://my.lwv.org/new-york/suffolk-county>.

TAKE ACTION ON KEY ISSUES BEFORE SESSION ENDS ON JUNE 7!

Defend Key Voting Legislation to Ensure Accurate Voter Rolls in NYS (the ERIC bill- A7052C)

This bill has passed in the Senate. It's on the floor calendar for a vote in the Assembly and we need to make sure we have enough yes votes for it to pass.

Call your Assemblymember and ask that they vote yes on A7052C!

Below is a sample script you can use:

"My name is ____ and I am calling to urge [Assemblymember] to vote yes to pass the ERIC bill, A7052C. A database such as ERIC would improve the accuracy of New York's voter rolls, increase access to voter registration, reduce election costs, and increase efficiency. In a time when mis and disinformation around our election process is only growing it's important that we do everything we can to instill trust in the electoral process and ERIC will help do just that."

Get one of the Nation's Most Impactful Plastic Packaging Reduction Bills Passed! (S4246D/A5322D)

This bill has made it! It will be on the floor calendar in the Senate and Assembly on Thursday or Friday of this week. There is still strong industry opposition so we need to make sure we have the yes votes to get the bill passed in both houses.