



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKHAVEN

VOTER – JANUARY 2026

January 13, 7 pm, zoom

RUNNING AND WINNING

Attend our meeting and help us plan a program called
Running and Winning.

We will be reaching out to high school or college students
who might want to run for office to meet public officials who
have run and won

And can advise young people how to win a seat

On a school board, town board, county legislature, or
fire department or community ambulance board

On January 13 we will share our plans for a Running and Winning Program in Brookhaven

What is a Running and Winning program? Many Leagues in New York State have conducted programs that introduce candidates who have won their campaigns to citizens who would like to get elected – as legislators, school board members, town or county officials, or other. Once the League decides on a group of elected officials they wish to honor, they work to recruit community members who may think of running for election, and have questions about how to proceed to win. After an opportunity to share information and answer questions, the program ends with a chance for both groups to meet and share their ideas and questions -- the persons who ran and won and persons who would like to earn a place on a local board.

Our Brookhaven League hopes to create an opportunity this spring for college or high school students, especially those who are ex officio members of their district's school board, to learn about winning a place on their school board. We have League members who live in the many school districts in our town. We invite them to join our committee to serve as representatives of the League to work with their school board and potential board members to encourage them to run. They are, after all, the residents who are most familiar with their schools.

UNITE AND RISE – THIRD STAGE

The United States League is continuing to advise us about priorities for Unite and Rise. The Third Stage includes:

Partnerships, activities, and tips for expanding voter engagement among students, justice-impacted people, and naturalized citizens to expand the franchise in 2026 elections. Together, we'll explore: student engagement and how to build community with campuses and youth-led organizations to energize new and first-time voters, collaborating with advocates beyond traditional democracy partners to protect voting rights and make civic participation more accessible, and naturalized citizens by partnering with immigrant-serving groups to reach new naturalized voters even in the face of new challenges.

We hope to follow these guidelines to expand our impact on students, justice-impacted people and naturalized citizens. At our meeting in November we learned from an advocate at Sepa Mujer, in Patchogue, about the pressures faced by immigrants and the support they receive from advocates to stay safe. An immigration attorney also spoke to us about the advice he gives immigrants to help them. We are working on the local committee to strengthen voter registration and voting efforts within the local jails and prisons and we are working with SILO (Self-Initiated Living Options in Medford) to provide with information about voting, and will continue our efforts at local colleges to educate students about voting. We invite them to become members of our league and are pleased that four college students have done so; we will include them in our planning efforts to be sure that we consider the concerns they have for our democracy.

The next NO KINGS Rally is being planned. Watch for it and join us.

Urge Your Members of Congress to Stand Up for Democracy

Just over one month into the current Administration, the President has issued a series of executive orders and directed actions that violate the law and Congress' power. Congress must act now to restore the stability of our nation before it's too late.

The US Constitution establishes the authority of each branch of government to ensure a system of checks and balances. Congress' daily inaction threatens the rule of law and our Constitution and greenlights the executive branch's gross overreach. Americans' liberties, the Constitution, and our democracy are at imminent risk.

Last month, Leagues from all 50 states and DC wrote to Congress demanding they take action. Now, you can make your voice heard.

Urge your members of Congress to stand up for our democracy.

MEETING ON THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

WHERE DO SPECIFIC POWERS LIE?

Attend our meeting on February 23 at 1 pm at the Longwood Library

Next Book Group is reading WE ARE EATING THE EARTH by MICHAEL GRUNWALD

Date of meeting to be announced

GUN LEGISLATION DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Back in 1996, Australia suffered what was then the worst mass shooting in world history (depending on how one defines it) at Port Arthur in Tasmania, where a man killed 35 people and injured 23 others. In response, the Australian government implemented some of the strictest gun control laws in the world. Fully automatic and semiautomatic guns were made almost impossible to get, a national gun registry was set up, waiting periods were imposed, and a large buyback program was conducted, which collected 650,000 weapons.

Twenty-nine years later, Australia has suffered another mass shooting at a Hanukkah celebration. Two gunmen, reportedly inspired by ISIS, killed 15 people and injured 40 more at Bondi Beach outside of Sydney.

This led some commentators, mostly American, to argue that this discredits gun control in general. The truth is the opposite—if anything, Australia has been somewhat lax.

Most obviously, Australia had a 29-year period with no major mass shootings. Now, if we define a mass shooting as one with four or more victims, then there have been several such events since 1996, but only a couple of the random spree shooting variety. America, by contrast, has the very worst kind of mass shootings on a practically weekly basis—indeed, one of them took place at Brown University just a few hours before the Bondi one, and among the survivors were two students who had already survived previous mass shootings.

More importantly, as spectacularly deadly mass murder events can be misleading, America's record on overall gun violence of all kinds is far, far worse—America's rate of gun homicide is about 62 times the Aussie rate, and America's rate of gun suicide is about eight times worse.

Now, the Bondi shooting was still plenty bad. Fifteen deaths and 40 injuries is a terrible tragedy. And it would have been worse if it had not been for an act of astounding heroism from an Aussie named Ahmed al Ahmed, who charged one of the shooters and wrestled away his rifle. Ahmed, a Syrian immigrant who arrived in Australia in 2006 and got his citizenship in 2022, was shot four times for his trouble, and reportedly may lose his left arm. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited Ahmed in the hospital to thank him.

But it would have been much, much worse still if not for Australia's gun laws. Footage of the massacre shows one of the culprits using a bolt-action rifle, firing about once a second for ten seconds until his clip runs out. This is because one of the culprits had a typical gun license, and that's all you can get legally.

(An excerpt by Ryan Cooper in the January issue of *The American Prospect*.)