

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKHAVEN

HERE IS OUR VOTER FOR FEBRUARY 2026

MEETING ON THE
THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION
FEBRUARY 23, 2026, 1 PM
AT LONGWOOD LIBRARY

We will be discussing our US Constitution –How and why it was written
What does it mean to us today?

James Madison wrote in The Federalist:

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government, but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.

Read the original constitution (Articles I thru VII). And bring a copy if it's in a form you can bring.

DID YOU MISS OUR JANUARY MEETING? RUNNING AND WINNING PLANS

At our meeting in January, Carole Huston presented information about an ambitious project we plan to begin working on– to give high school Juniors and Seniors the opportunity to explore public service as a career. During the workshop, students talk with local elected officials about their experiences in politics, explore their own leadership abilities and develop teamwork skills working with other students to create and present an issue-driven mock campaign. All high schools in Brookhaven will be invited to send students, with the goal being to have around 30-40 students participating. It is a day-long workshop that gives high school Juniors and Seniors the opportunity to explore public service as a career. The elected officials tell of their journey to become involved in politics and small teams of students interview elected officials in greater depth regarding the seeking and holding of public office. We invite you to join our planning committee.

INTERESTED? Email carolehuston@hotmail.com

CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES' FORUM

Together Long Island is hosting a Candidates' Forum

Saturday January 31st, 12:00 to 2:30

featuring Osman Canales, Immigrant & Human Rights Activist

as our keynote speaker

So far the following candidates have confirmed:

Congressional District 1: Chris Gallant and Lukas Ventouras

Congressional District 2: Garrett Petersen, Pat Halpin and Jessica Murphy

At Sayville Congregational Church, 131 Middle Road, Sayville

Due to space restrictions in the church, pre-registration is required. Here is the

link to register: <https://www.mobilize.us/togetherlongisland/event/887954/>

For questions, call Lisa Antonelli, 631 599-0152.

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

As we reflect on the triumphs and history of African Americans, we want to acknowledge the role of Black women in the voting rights movement. From Ida B. Wells to Stacey Abrams, Black women have played a pivotal role in the advancement of voting rights. Although there have been obstacles along the way, Black women as a collective power are a force to be reckoned with. While Black women are not a monolith in any shape or form, they have and continue to use their voices to make progress on many issues, especially voting rights.

The voting rights advocates of today stand on the shoulders of those who came before them. Born into slavery, Ida B. Wells was one of the early leaders of the civil rights movement. As a journalist, she led an antilynching crusade and fought for women's rights. She also fought tirelessly for the right to vote, all while facing discrimination within the suffragist movement. In 1913, Wells co-founded the Alpha Suffrage Club, the first Black women's suffrage group in the state of Illinois. To this day, Wells is honored as an advocate for women's equality and racial equality.

We can't talk about voting rights without mentioning Fannie Lou Hamer. Born in 1917, Hamer became a prominent voice in the civil rights and voting rights movements. As a Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizer, Hamer led voter registration movements across the country and co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964. In that year, Hamer helped organize Freedom Summer, a mobilizing effort that brought college students together to help with Black voter registration in the South.

Shirley Chisholm elevated the voice of black women in politics in the 1960s overcoming many dangerous obstacles and blatant racism. Chisholm began her activism in the 1960s by working in organizations that fought for voting rights, including the League, promoting civic education, and championing civil rights. She was the first Black woman to serve in Congress and the first Black person to run for president in a major party. Seeing Kamala Harris elected vice president, I believe, would have bought her joy, fulfillment, and the urge to continue the fight.

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH, continued

Barbara Jordan, the first black woman elected to the Texas legislature represented the voters of Houston at the height of the civil rights movement. She was also the first Black woman elected to Congress from the deep South. Jordan had the honor of delivering the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in 1976, where she noted that her presence, "...is one additional bit of evidence that the American dream need not forever be deferred." I believe she would have seen Vice President Harris's election as a next step toward that dream that had been too long deferred.

The 2020 election had the highest voter participation in American history, ushering in more people of color and more Black women into elected office than ever before. According to the [Center for American Women in Politics](#), in the 117th Congress, 26 Black women currently serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, but there are no Black women serving in the Senate since Vice President Harris ascended to the White House. In state legislatures around the country, more than 300 Black women have been elected to statehouse offices, and of the top 100 largest cities in America, six Black women currently serve as mayors.

While these numbers are a step in the right direction, as only the second Black woman elected president of the League of Women Voters in 100 years, it is clear that representation of Black women and women of color in politics and leadership roles in our country still has a long way to go. We must continue to tell the stories of Black women to inspire the next generation of Black women to seek elected office, push for change, and continue to shape a more equitable America. More importantly, white America must be moved to appreciate, acknowledge, and understand the contributions to our country by these women and their other colleagues of color. Each one of us has a part to play in the long campaign for a just, equitable world. I look forward to the day that we will no longer need a Black history month because America will finally acknowledge that Black history IS American history

(This article was printed in the TBRNewsMedia newspapers in print and online on January 29)

Making Democracy Work: What Do We Do Next in the Fight for Affordable Health Care?

By Elise Antonelli

On January 22nd the House voted to extend the Affordable Care Act (ACA, or Obamacare) subsidies. Recognizing the need of our communities to have access to affordable health care, 17 Republicans sided with Democrats in voting for the extension. But why was the extension necessary in the first place? As is being uncovered on a daily basis, the provisions of the so-called “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (OBBA, or H.R.1) which the president signed into law on July 4, 2025, have such egregious cuts to health care that even those vehemently opposed to Obamacare recognize the need for subsidies until the current administration can come up with a better plan. The Congressional Budget Office reported the OBBA will make low-income people poorer and wealthier people richer. Distributional Effects of H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Congressional Budget Office letter dated 6/12/25).

Recognizing the need for more information on this topic, the League of Women Voters Huntington, in cooperation with the Healthcare Education Project, sponsored a webinar centered on the effects on health care of H.R.1. Panelists Mark Hannay of Metro NY Health Care for All, Vanessa Baird-Streeter of the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island, and Anna Barone of Grace Group Medicare Consultants – with an introduction by Cynthia Ngombe of the Healthcare Education Project who coordinated the event - led us through some alarming facts and statistics. H.R.1 cuts over \$1 trillion from Medicaid, Medicare and the Affordable Care Act, strips Medicaid and Essential Plan coverage from millions of New Yorkers, and slashes hospital and nursing home funding. Effects of these cuts mean premium tax credits for buying coverage on ACA marketplaces will be discontinued, people will face large increases in

private health care premiums, and copays and deductibles will rise. An estimated 1.5 million New Yorkers will become uninsured, including 30,000 Long Islanders.

One scenario might play out like this. As people are forced to let their insurance lapse because they are either excluded from various public programs or because they can no longer afford private insurance premiums, they will forgo doctor visits and instead wait until they are sick enough to go to hospital ERs. With cuts in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement and potential staff shortages, hospitals facing staffing shortages and funding cuts may be forced to dramatically scale back services or close. The Health Education Project (HEP) estimates New York hospitals will lose \$8 billion in annual funding and 34,000 New Yorkers could lose their hospital jobs. The closure of local hospitals or reduction in their ability to serve their communities will have negative effects on people of all income levels and all political affiliations.

It is important for all of us to understand these changes and cuts and how they may affect each individual and family. Even those fortunate enough to be able to withstand premium increases may know people who are less able to do so. HEP's online calculator can help in understanding potential increases in out-of-pocket costs and eligibility impacts:

<https://healthcareeducationproject.org/one-big-bill>.

What do we do next? Now that the extension for ACA subsidies has been approved by the House, the vote goes to the Senate. Call US Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and tell them you want the subsidies extended. On the State level, the New York Health Care Act (Assembly bill A.1466) proposes a comprehensive, single-payer health care system for all New Yorkers. The legislation is currently in committee in the New York State Assembly. Contact your state assemblymember to express your advocacy for that bill. The League of Women Voters Vote 411 website (www.vote411.org) is always a great resource to find any of your elected officials.

The wealth disparity in America is widely recognized. Some people have concierge doctors and some are forced to choose between groceries and going

to the doctor. Some have multiple homes and some risk foreclosure on their homes because of staggering medical bills. Many have limited access to affordable health care and the OBBBA has made it even less accessible. The common thread is that it benefits ALL of us to have a healthy population. Fighting for affordable health care is one way to achieve that goal.

Please share these free resources with those who may need them:

- Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
- People who are presently receiving Medicaid and may be eligible for assistance with addressing social care needs (i.e. housing insecurity, food insecurity, transportation barriers, etc.) can contact HealiHelp@hwcli.com or 516-505-4434.
- For Health Insurance Enrollment assistance with public programs like Medicaid, CHIP, and ACA : <https://hwcli.com/work-we-do/direct-services/> .
- SNAP Enrollment: <https://hwcli.com/work-we-do/direct-services/snap/>.
- Medicare Rights Center has a free telephone hotline staffed by trained counselors: 800-333-4114.

Elise Antonelli is Co-Chair of the Issues and Advocacy Committee of the League of Women Voters of Huntington, a nonprofit nonpartisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Visit <https://my.lwv.org/new-york/suffolk-county> or call 631-862-6860.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT OUR LEAGUES ARE DOING ON HOT TOPICS

This Saturday the 31st from 9:00am-10:30am will be our Legislative Hot Topics briefing. The link to register is below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/0ZZaXkZwThSUo3WqoLpMnQ>
