

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF SCHENECTADY COUNTY

BULLETIN

July-August 2020

President's Letter

Dear LWVSC Friends,

I hope this Bulletin finds you, your family and friends in good health. We've just received wonderful news: The New York State Assembly and Senate have passed legislation that will allow any voter to vote absentee in the November election. In addition, automatic voter registration was also passed and will become effective in 2023. We can now vote safely in November, and look forward to a much easier voter registration process in the future. Thank you to the LWVNYS for their tireless lobbying on these important issues.

These past weeks have been very tumultuous and emotional ones for us. New York State has begun to open slowly, and yet COVID-19 still follows us, spiking from time to time. We've watched as other parts of the nation desperately fight the virus yet resist safety measures to reduce it. Recent events have brought citizens to the streets, demanding justice for all People of Color. The daily news shows us how peaceful demonstrations can suddenly become scenes of tear gas and violence.

At the same time, there is encouraging news. Many of our cities, including Schenectady and the Capital Region, are beginning to address the racial injustices experienced by People of Color and work towards equitable solutions. An urgent resolution was passed at the recent LWV virtual convention, "Racial Justice for Black People and All People of Color". (Please be sure to read the Resolution printed later in this Bulletin.) I am pleased to announce that LWVSC now has a representative on the LWVNYS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. Vicky Cooper will serve as our liaison for this LWV-supported initiative. Thank you, Vicky!

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in the annual LWVSC vote in June. A total of 42 votes were cast, including 14 votes by board members taken during the June meeting on Zoom. I'm pleased to announce that the LWVSC budget, local program, and slate of leaders passed unanimously. Thank you, too, for your comments, ideas, and suggestions that were included on many of the ballots. I am constantly reminded how proud I am to be part of LWVSC.

As this time of year tends to be less active for our League, this issue of the Bulletin covers both July and August.

In League,
Ann Hatke

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force

In June I stepped outside my box and agreed to represent the Schenectady League on the LWVNYS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force.

One of the goals of the DEI Task Force is to promote awareness and consciousness-raising among league members and partners. The DEI Task Force started prior to June so I have been catching up on the communications; the initial meeting will be held soon. In addition, I am reviewing the history of the League of Women Voters (LWV) and the LWV of Schenectady. Two books I would like to recommend are "Waking Up White - And Finding Myself in the Story of Race", by Debbi Irving (on the LWVUS DEI recommended reading list), and "The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters" by Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins (the first African American executive director of the League of Women Voters of the United States and its Education Fund).

I look forward to representing Schenectady on the DEI Task Force and will communicate with you about initiatives as they develop.

Thank you.

Victoria Cooper
LWV Schenectady Representative
LWVNYS DEI Task Force

RACIAL JUSTICE RESOLUTION Passed at LWVUS Convention. June 2020

RACIAL JUSTICE FOR BLACK PEOPLE AND ALL PEOPLE OF COLOR

SUBMITTED BY

LWVMO, LWVAZ, LWVCA, LWVDE, LWVMA, LWVMN, LWVNM, LWVNY, LWVAL, LWVCT, LWVIA, LWVKS, LWVMD, LWVNJ, LWVOH, LWVSC, LWVTN, LWVUT, LWVOR, LWVFL

- Whereas**, the killings of George Floydⁱ and countless other Black people have focused our nation's attention on the continuing structural and systemic racism in law enforcement and the justice system; and,
- Whereas**, Black people and all historically marginalized people of color are disproportionately criminalized and targeted by excessive force and brutality by law enforcement; and,

3. **Whereas**, delegates to the 2020 League of Women Voters (League) Convention are outraged by these injustices in law enforcement that unfairly target Black people and all people of color; and,

4. **Whereas**, the current crisis is a result of racism and socio-economic inequalities that have marginalized, discriminated against and harmed Black people and all people of color. Education, housing, employment, healthcare and every aspect of American life have been impacted; and,

5. **Whereas**, the League acknowledges painfully that America is a nation founded on racism.ⁱⁱⁱ We must end white privilege^{iv} and the myth of white supremacy if we are to become the nation we pledge to be; and,

6. **Whereas**, the League commemorates the centennial of our organization and passage of the 19th Amendment along with the courage, persistence and vision of our founding members. We have openly acknowledged that our past has been marred by racism and we will continue to work toward being Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive, (DEI)^{vi}; and

7. **Whereas**, the League believes in individual liberties, civil rights, human rights, and voting rights writ large; we defend democracy and oppose all threats to these constitutional rights^{vii}; therefore,

8. **We Resolve First**, That the League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism, and the harm that it causes; and,

9. **We Resolve Second**, That the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident; that Black, Indigenous and all people of color (BIPOC)^{viii} deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done, so that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and gender identity or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all"^{viii}.

RACIAL JUSTICE FOR BLACK PEOPLE AND ALL PEOPLE OF COLOR, p. 2

May 29, 2020 LWVUS Response to Police Killing of George Floyd, <https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwvus-responds-police-killing-george-floyd>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/8/13/17938186/police-shootings-killings-racism-racial-disparities>; <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/11-15-Police-Force.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Constitution of the United States of America, Article I, Section 2(2)

^{iv} Pledge of Allegiance, <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm?vm=r>

^v "Facing Hard Truths About the League's Origin," August 8, 2018, <https://www.lwv.org/blog/facing-hard-truths-about-leagues-origin>,

^{vi} See Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/policies-guidelines/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-policy>

^{vii} See LWVUS Position on Equality of Opportunity, Pgs 8 & 10, Impact on Issues 2018-2020/Equality of Opportunity, <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2019-04/LWV%202018-20%20Impact%20on%20Issues.pdf>

^{viii} Pledge of Allegiance, <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm?vm=r>; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/policiesguidelines/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-policy>

Voter Services Report

Good news!

The State Legislature has passed 2 important bills. The first one allows expanded absentee voting in the November elections. This should be similar to the Governor's executive order which allowed absentee voting in the June primaries with the excuse of "temporary illness or disability".

The second is Automatic Voter Registration which automatically registers people to vote when they interact with a large number of government agencies, including the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, Dept. of Health (Medicaid), CUNY and SUNY schools and the Office of Veterans Affairs. There are safeguards in the legislation to prevent ineligible people from registering to vote, such as non-citizens and an opt-out provision. This bill would not take effect until 2023.

The Governor has not yet signed these bills but he is expected to do so.

Cheryl Nechamen, Voter Services Chair

How We Elect Our Representatives

Electoral Systems are the rules and procedures governing the election of public officials by specifying ballot structure, district size, and the way that votes are translated into seats. Electoral systems can enhance or deny voter representation just as gerrymandering can when district lines are drawn.

The **Plurality Election** is the most used electoral system in the U.S. (It is also called the At-Large or Winner-Take-All system). The candidate with the most votes wins, without necessarily receiving a majority of the votes. Such systems allow 51% of the voters to control 100% of the seats. Some Plurality Elections require **Runoff Elections** if no candidate achieves a certain percentage of the vote. In runoff elections voters go back to the polls to ensure that the winner receives a majority or certain percentage of the vote.

Another electoral system used is the **Proportional Election**, which depends upon the percentage of the vote that the candidates receive. For example, 40% of the vote gets 40% of the seats in a legislative body. 60% of the vote gets 60% of the seats in a legislative body.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) or Instant Runoff Voting is a form of proportional voting that has gained popularity and deserves further explanation. Voters rank candidates by preference, indicating a "back-up" candidate if their first choice does not have enough support to get elected. RCV can also be used to achieve a proportional result (i.e., 40% of the votes get 40% of the seats).

Verifiable Voting comprises procedures that provide a secondary confirmation, such as a paper ballot, that the voting equipment has correctly counted a voter's ballot.

Consider: How do you choose a candidate? Do you always vote for your favorite candidate regardless of outcome? If so, you have cast a **Sincere Vote**. In Electoral Systems that encourage sincere voting you can vote for your preferred candidate and not worry about "wasting" your vote. If your candidate was the winner, then you have also cast an **Effective Vote**.

You may at times consider **Strategic Voting** and vote for a candidate other than your first choice in hopes of preventing what you consider a less-than-desirable outcome. You decide to vote not for your favorite candidate, but for the candidate who may have a greater chance of victory.

You might not vote for your first choice in order to avoid the **Spoiler Effect**, which can happen when two like-minded candidates split the vote and, as a result, help elect a less favored candidate. A well-known example of the spoiler effect occurred during the 1992 presidential election when Ross Perot split the vote with George H.W. Bush and helped elect Bill Clinton with 43% of the vote. The spoiler effect occurred again in 2000 when Ralph Nader split the vote with Al Gore, helping to elect George W. Bush.

With more than two candidates on the ballot, **Vote Splitting** can occur. Again, the outcome might lead to the election of a least favored candidate winning as two favored candidates split the vote.

The prospect of vote splitting can also cause good, like-minded candidates to not even run for office. This reduces your choices as a voter, especially when parties discourage people from running. Whenever votes are not useful in the election of a winner, they are referred to as **Wasted Votes**. Often this means all ballots cast for the losing candidates are labeled "wasted," but it can also mean the extra or not needed votes cast in support of a much-liked winner.

Are some Electoral Systems better than others? What criteria would you include to create a better Electoral System? Would you like to have a discussion on this topic at an upcoming meeting?

Reprinted from the LWV of East Nassau Voter

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. We work to increase the understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy"

President	Ann Hatke
Vice-President	Jude Rabig
Secretary	Heide Westergaard
Bulletin Editor	Helen MacDonald

Using Social Media to Get Out the Vote

One of the best ways to get out the vote is to talk to people, one-on-one. In the past, LWV volunteers have knocked on doors, visited farmers' markets and day-care centers, and canvassed neighborhoods to get people to register to vote. Nowadays, Covid-19 has closed many of these doors. But the best way to spread the word about voting is still one-on-one. In the isolation of coronavirus, social media is the way many people "talk" to each other.

Are you on Facebook? Consider using it to spread the word about voting to your family and friends. Tell everyone about Vote411.org, the League's website for voter registration and information. Remind people to make sure they're registered to vote at their current address.

Got kids, grandkids, or neighbors heading off to college? Ask if they've arranged for absentee ballots. Help your Facebook friends keep up to date with the constantly changing election rules and regulations in this crazy year.

Young people especially depend on social media. Instagram is popular with the younger crowd—I've asked my kids to help me spread the word to other youngsters. Few young people realize that you can register to vote online—just click on Vote411.org.

The League of Women Voters of Schenectady County has an active Facebook account, and we're just starting to break into Twitter at [@lwvschenectady](https://twitter.com/lwvschenectady). If you're active on social media, please consider helping to spread the League's message by liking and sharing posts.

Just one "share" sends a message out like ripples in a pool, and then maybe someone else shares it. Social media is often used to spread rumors, hate, and gossip. Let's use its undeniable power to spread our message of democracy.

Anita Sanchez

**Stay Up to Date on Voting Changes
Related to COVID-19 in NY**

**Text VoteNY to
474747**

Text VoteNY to 474747 to
receive updates from the
League of Women Voters
of NYS and stay in the
know on all things voting
in 2020.



A Guide to Disinfectants in the Covid-19 Age

Alcohols

	Reducers	Oxidizers	Quaternary ammonium salts
Ethyl alcohol, Isopropyl alcohol	L-lactic acid, Citric Acid	Bleach, Hydrogen peroxide, Peracetic acid	Benzalkonium chloride
These work by disrupting a virus's lipid envelope by clumping or denaturing its proteins	These work by denaturing a virus's proteins, disrupting its lipid envelope, and reducing critical viral components	These work by denaturing a virus's proteins, disrupting its lipid envelope, and oxidizing sulfur bonds in proteins, enzymes and other metabolites.	These work by removing a virus's lipid envelope, denaturing its proteins, and disrupting its enzymes.
Wet contact time needed: 1 – 5 minutes	Wet contact time needed: 5 minutes	Wet contact time needed: Bleach: 1 minute Hydrogen peroxide: 5 minutes Peracetic acid: 2-5 minutes	Wet contact time needed: 10 minutes
Found in: wipes, sprays, hand sanitizers	Found in: sprays	Found in: wipes, sprays, concentrates	Found in: wipes, sprays, concentrates, antibacterial hand soaps
Flammable, poison risk if ingested, can damage plastics and cause heady fumes.	Can irritate skin, but generally considered as safe.	Can irritate skin, mucous membranes and airways, and can damage clothing.	Can irritate skin.
Ensure adequate ventilation. Wear gloves.	Wear gloves.	Ensure adequate ventilation. Wear gloves.	Deactivated by hard water and fabric. Wear gloves.



The Mysterious PMP

Every now and then, we hear the LWV term, PMP. PMP stands for “per member payment.” How does PMP affect our League?

When you become a member of the LWV of Schenectady County, you automatically become a member of the NYS League and the national League, LWVUS. When members pay their dues each year, the local Leagues are obliged to pay a portion of those dues to support their state League and LWVUS. The combined PMP that is due to the state and national Leagues each year often represents as much as 90% of a local League’s total dues for that year. We must all keep in mind that we are supporting three worthy organizations with our dues, but that our own local League is supported by the smallest amount.

Our League goals are to educate citizens about government and public policy, encourage citizen participation in elections, and influence public policy relating to issues we’ve studied.

Membership makes working on our goals possible.

MEMBERSHIP FOR JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021

Return to: LWV of Schenectady County, P.O. Box 9135, Schenectady, NY 12309

New or Renewing Members Please Confirm This Contact Information

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

_____ \$60 Individual _____ \$85 Household _____ \$20 Full time HS student

Additional support for the League, dues plus \$10 contribution (\$70 or \$95 – circle one)

Confidential arrangements for special payment or partial assistance can be made. Contact Connie Young at 393-7061 with questions about dues or payments. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.

I am sending my membership dues payment, but please consider me an INACTIVE member.

ACTIVE MEMBERS: The League depends upon the work of its members, even if for just a short task. Please check any areas that interest you. We appreciate your help.

Judicial _____ Health _____ Observer Corps _____ Fund Raising _____

Citizenship Mentoring Group _____ Environment _____ Education _____

Voter Services: Register Voters _____ Candidate Forums _____ Voter Information _____

Computer Skills: Graphics/Layout _____ Data Bases _____ Website Work _____

Facebook _____ Electronic Publicity _____ Other Technical Skill(Describe) _____

Other areas of interest _____

