

President's Letter

Dear LWWSC Friends,

In the last few weeks, I've been so moved by the many pictures of voters – whether dropping an absentee ballot in a mailbox, waiting for hours in socially-distanced lines, or entering their regular polling places on November 3. The unprecedented voter turn-out was everything the League of Women Voters could have hoped for. In the midst of a pandemic, voters have produced the largest election in American history. Americans still have trust in their democracy, in spite of our many differences of opinion. This is cause for great celebration.

When I wrote the first draft of this letter, we did not know the outcome of the presidential election. The waiting and watching was almost unbearable. I had to remind myself that a delayed result due to the increased number of ballots was a good sign – that our election system was working. Making sure that each vote was carefully counted ensured the integrity of this process and now gives us hope for greater voter participation in future elections. Another cause for celebration...

We have the election results at last. Let's take a deep breath and thank all the election officials, poll monitors and poll workers, many who were LWWSC volunteers. Their long hours made it easier for us to cast our votes easily and safely. Thank you to the vote counters who stayed on the job until it was done – for us. We thank all our members who registered a new voter, offered voting information, stuck a LWW lawn sign in the ground, reminded someone to vote, or supported this wonderful election process.

I wish all of you a most happy, healthy and peaceful Thanksgiving holiday.

In a spirit of celebration,
Ann Hatke

Announcement:

We have reluctantly cancelled our annual December Holiday Luncheon due to continued concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. This gives us one more event to look forward to next year at this time.

Citizenship Mentoring Group Report

November is normally the time when I prepare a final grant report for our LWV New Citizens Voter Registration Grant. However, we were only able to attend two naturalization ceremonies before the twelve remaining ceremonies were either cancelled or closed to the public due to COVID-19. I was delighted to learn this week that our grant has been extended until June 2021, and all grant funds may continue be used. Thank you, LWV!

Ann Hatke

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Assessment Survey was completed by the League of Women Voters of Schenectady County (LWVSC) Board Members submitted to the DEINYS Task Force shortly thereafter.

The assessment survey gave the board the opportunity to review the League's actions with respect to DEI. Here are some examples of actions taken by the Schenectady League.

- Currently displaying the definition of DEI and the policy on our website.
- Several members are engaged in DEI learning opportunities.
- There is a current member on the LWVNYS Task Force.
- The Leagues priorities are: Voter Protection, Voting Rights, Election Reform, Voter Registration, Women's Issues and Citizenship preparation.
- The Schenectady League has reached out to the local NAACP, DEI Director of the Schenectady School District, participated in the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to implement a program to educate individuals with disabilities about voting and through LWVNYS established a program to help prepare members of the immigrant community for US Citizenship Exam.
- LWVUS voting materials available in Spanish.

Examples of some actions that may be included in the LWVSC Action Plan, due at a date, to be determined in 2021.

- The League will explore avenues for recruitment; difficult to do during the current Covid-19 pandemic.
- Develop a DEI policy for the Board of Directors.
- Ensure that the League is reaching out to diverse communities.
- Create programs and outreach activities to target members of diverse backgrounds.

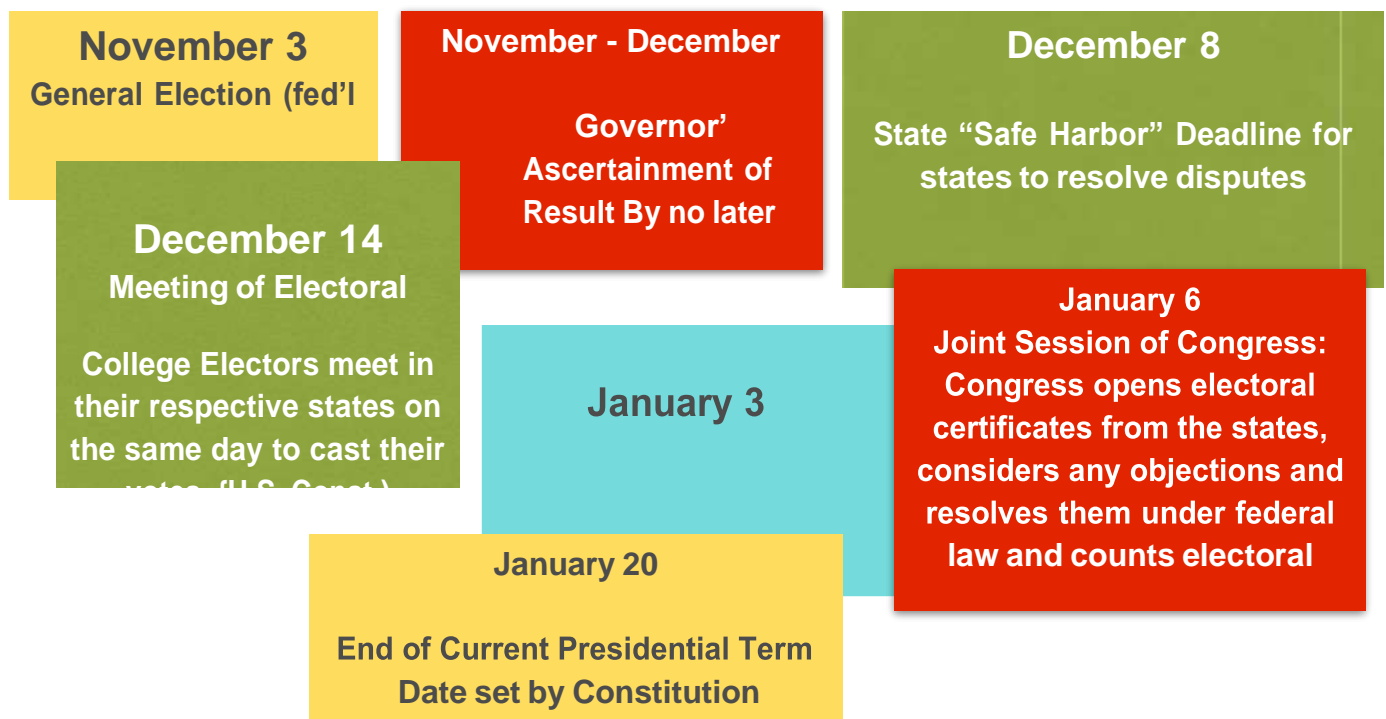
Our League is doing a great job with diversity, equity and inclusion. In my opinion, we can be phenomenal! One of the proposed plans for the near future is an optional survey of the League. This is important if we are to determine if we are making progress or if our goals are realistic. This is also a positive approach to being involved in the National League and will be helpful in creating the Schenectady League's Action Plan.

You can look forward to hearing more about this in the future.

Victoria Cooper

National Task Force on Election Crises

LWVUS is a member of the National Task Force on Election Crises, a diverse, cross-partisan group of more than 50 experts in election law, election administration, national security, cybersecurity, voting rights, civil rights, technology, media, public health, and emergency response. The task force’s core mission is to ensure a free and fair 2020 presidential election by recommending responses to a range of election crises. Our focus is ensuring that the election runs smoothly during challenging circumstances, that disputes are handled in a way that maximizes confidence in the outcome, and that there is a peaceful transition or continuation of power on January 20, 2021. The only electoral outcome the task force advocates is that the election is free and fair. Background: Transition Period An orderly and peaceful transition of power between the sitting president and the president-elect is a hallmark of a functioning democracy. Since President George Washington peacefully transferred power to President John Adams, American presidents have handed over the keys to the machinery of government to their successors. This process allows for disappointed supporters of the losing candidate to accept the results of the election and for the next administration to begin preparations for governing. A peaceful transition is necessary for the stability of the country, national security, effective governing, and safeguarding of U.S. interests



For more information, see the task force’s website www.electiontaskforce.org

*This petition is sponsored by: Alliance for Youth Action, American Promise, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Common Cause, Daily Kos, DC Vote, Declaration for American Democracy, DemCast USA, Democracy Matters, Free Speech for the People, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, **League of Women Voters**, Open The Government, People For the American Way, Pride At Work, SMART Elections, Stamp Stamped*

The next President & Congress must enact democracy reform

In 2021, the next president will have many important issues to address: from combating climate change and gun violence, to overcoming the coronavirus pandemic and dismantling systemic racism in America. But in order for the next administration to do that effectively, we need to build a stronger and more representative democracy.

That's why the next president must urge Congress to pass the For the People Act (HR 1) as a first priority in their administration.

In March 2019, the For the People Act (HR 1) passed the House with unanimous support from the Democratic caucus, and is supported by every Democrat in the Senate -- **yet the Senate Majority Leader refuses to bring it up for a vote.**

The For the People Act is a once-in-a-generation package of proven reforms that would:

- Expand and protect voting rights and access to the ballot;
- Put ordinary Americans ahead of Big Money donors;
- End gerrymandering so that electoral districts are fairly drawn; and
- Clean up government and hold elected officials to the highest ethical standards.

This bill would transform our political system into one that is **more inclusive, responsive, and representative of the American people.**

The American people are tired of a government that serves only the wealthy and corporate interests. **We demand a democracy that works for all of us.**

We need a democracy where **voters are protected from discrimination** and can make themselves heard at the ballot box. A democracy where **electoral districts are drawn fairly**, so that every voter's ballot is of equal value. A democracy that **isn't bought and paid for** by the highest corporate bidder. And a democracy where ordinary Americans -- more women, people of color, and working people -- can run for office **without relying on big corporate dollars.**

Just imagine what we could accomplish in 2021 and beyond if our government actually worked for us.

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March On!

March On!, written and illustrated by sisters Lucy and Grace Lang, celebrates the history of American women's suffrage and the iconic 1915 New York City women's march, as told in rhyme by a grandmother to her granddaughter at bedtime.

Throughout United States history, many Americans could not vote to choose the country's leaders. Over time, many brave people demanded change. On October 23, 1915, more than 25,000 women marched down New York

City's Fifth Avenue to fight for women's right to vote. It was the largest march in the city's history! Over many years, and many marches, Americans have continued to fight for equal voting rights. This inspiring picture book shows young readers what can happen when people come together to fight for their rights. Since many Americans are still denied the right to vote, women and others can and must continue to March On!

New Member

Mary Thackery

Mary recently retired following 20 years of fund raising at Union College. She is the past president of the Woman's club of Albany and she remains active in the organization's focus on education and providing food for women and children in the inner city area. The group is currently helping the Schenectady County "Things of Our Own Program" which assists the transition of displaced children to foster homes.

The fact that the LWV is a non partisan organization appeals to Mary. She plans to remain in inactive status for the time being.

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

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”

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 _____

Jill Biden will be the First First Lady to Work Fulltime

Pat Nixon was the first first lady to wear pants in public. Hillary Clinton was the first first lady to be elected to a public office. And now, Jill Biden is projected to become the first first lady to keep her full-time job outside of the White House.

Katherine Jellison, a history professor at Ohio University, said Biden will bring the role of first lady of the United States into the 21st century.

“If Dr. Biden is able to pull this off, she will be leading a life that is much more like that of everyday American women: balancing their role in a family with a professional life,” Jellison said.

Biden said she will commute from the White House to the Northern Virginia Community College, where she has taught English for a decade.

In her introduction video during the Democratic National Convention, Biden made it clear that she could do both jobs: FLOTUS and professor. She managed to keep teaching full time when she served as second lady for eight years. When asked in August during a CBS interview about her plans if her husband, Joe Biden, were to win the presidential election, Biden responded: “Oh, yes, I will continue teaching. I’m a teacher. That’s who I am.”

Michael LaRosa, a spokesperson for Biden, said the future first lady is “enormously grateful” to the country for electing her husband.

“She is spending time with her children and grandchildren in Wilmington, Delaware,” LaRosa said in a statement. “Dr. Biden is focused on building her team and developing her priorities focused on education, military families, and veterans and cancer.”

Historically, first ladies are among the most important political actors in the White House as trusted advisors to the president, according to Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy. Since 1992, the Office of the First Lady has averaged about 16 to 25 staff members. Her most important tasks include presidential advising and communications.

Biden’s tenure will coincide with the vice presidency of Kamala Harris, the first woman and Black and South Asian person to serve in the country’s second-highest office. According to Jellison, this “dynamic duo” has the potential to inspire young girls and reshape the country’s expectations for what leaders can and should be.

“I think they are both great role models for American women and, frankly, American everyone,” Jellison said. “It’s good for little boys and men to see women like this in the spotlight.”

Source: *The 19th News* (<http://www.19thnews.org>)