

President's Letter

Letter from the President

Hello, LWVSC Friends,

I hope all of you are well, enjoying warmer (and longer!) days of sunshine, and finding success in obtaining your vaccination appointment. In many ways, it does seem like we are truly on the road to recovery.

March is Women's History Month, a perfect occasion to advocate once again for the long-overdue ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Right now, thirty-eight states have ratified the amendment, which would normally be the number needed for the amendment to pass, but there are still unanswered legal questions. Five states have rescinded their ratification, for which there is no guidance, and several states ratified after the 1982 deadline. We'll be watching closely as some members of Congress try to bring some new momentum to this important issue once again.

Voter suppression is back in the news again barely three months after the November 2020 election. According to NPR, forty-three states are considering at least 253 bills that could influence how we vote in the next election. For example, some states want more security measures; others are considering reducing the number of voting days; there are new concerns about early voting; and some want to make ID requirements permanent. We hope this will be a work in progress rather than a partisan tightening of restrictions.

We'll also be hearing more and more about redistricting in the coming weeks. LWVUS will have a major push beginning in April for the creation of fair and transparent mapping in all 50 states plus Washington, D.C. Their hope is to educate communities about redistricting and to prevent all racial or political gerrymandering. Local LWV Leagues have been asked to participate on April 29 for the kick-off for "People Powered Fair Maps". Watch for more information about what LWVSC has planned for that event!

In League,
Ann Hatke

SAVE THE DATES! – Upcoming LWVSC Virtual Events

Board Meeting – Wednesday, March 10 at 3:00 pm

LWVSC Webinar – “Voter Turnout in 2020 – How Did It Differ from Earlier Years”

Tuesday, March 23 at 7:00 pm

(Speakers: Zoe Oxley and Pauline Kinsella)

LWV People Powered Fair Maps Events (TBA) – April 29

NEW MEMBERS

Jennifer Smaniuk

Jennifer and her husband teach English as a new language in the North Colonie School System. She embraces the LWV philosophy and has joined the League to be a productively engaged citizen in our democratic process. She is interested in helping with educational programs, voter registration, voter information, Facebook, electronic publicity, zoom conferencing and creating informational videos.

She is active in her four children's extra curricular activities, is a Girl Scout Troop leader and also participates in various church activities.

Kathleen Loomis

Kathleen is a graduate of St Rose College. She has worked as an accountant at Key Bank in this area and in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as with other companies. Kathleen has joined the League to become more informed with current issues. She is interested in the Observer Corps, candidate forums and voter education.

She is an avid tennis player, and enjoys hiking and snowshoeing.

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”

Spotlight on Diversity Equity and Inclusion

March is Women's History Month and the League of Women Voters (LWV) has an abundance of prominent women who impacted this country in a major way. The spotlight will be on two lesser known women working for change at the beginning of the League. At its inception the league was confronted with issues regarding diversity, equity and inclusion. The weak action of the league (when taken) to address issues of race was a result of the culture, norms and politics of the time.

Did you know that when the famous photo of the 1917 Suffrage Parade in New York was taken (everyone dressed in white) that black women were there too... relegated to the back of the parade.

In 1919, after World War II, the LWV emerged as the National American Woman Suffrage Association was disbanded. Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the LWV as an organization, nonpartisan and non-sectarian, to "Finish the fight." However, the culture of excluding women of color from full membership status continued in the new organization. Issues of race were referred to as a "problem". A committee for the Study of Negro Problems was formed; unlike other committees it was not funded and did not report to the national organization.

At the League's 1921 convention, Addie Waites Hutton a prominent African-American clubwoman and field secretary for the NAACP asked the LWV for assistance in protesting voting discrimination. One hundred years later the United States is still embroiled in protests regarding voting discrimination.

Victoria Cooper
LWVSC Diversity Task Force Representative

5 Ways to do DEI Right

We need to adopt a new mindset and do new behaviors to see meaningful change. Here's the right approach to DEI that goes beyond impulsively rolling out training:

1. **Figure out where you are.** How are your policies and talent processes supporting or undermining equity? How about your culture and its norms? What are your leaders' levels of knowledge, skill, and commitment? It's important to assess such competencies.
2. **Decide where you want to go.** Equity goes far beyond the colors of the faces in your workforce. Build on the recommendations from the assessment to determine mission-critical goals that are in your control and a stretch, but doable.
3. **Identify why you want to go there.** How will those goals help you solve an *existing* pressing problem, or take you from good to great? How will they help your people do their jobs better, or get better results that already matter?
4. **Get your house in order.** If you have a toxic culture, poor leadership, poor accountability, your DEI efforts are doomed. You can heal *while* you're doing DEI, but neglect serious organizational deficits at your peril.
5. **Create a clear, step-by-step action plan.** To create meaningful change, DEI efforts must include clear goals, metrics, timelines, and responsible parties who are held accountable.

Modified from an article by Susan Rinderli written for TLNT 7/22/20



NEWS

Continuing to Counter Disinformation about Elections

Mis- and disinformation about the 2020 election continues across social media and fringe media outlets. These lies have spurred violence and continue to threaten our democracy. The only way to effectively win against the lies is to avoid spreading them and counter with facts. If you see a lie about elections on social media, do not engage with it. Do not comment or share, even to provide the truth. Any engagement will boost the algorithm and ensure the false post is seen by more users, which helps the disinformation spread more. Use your platforms to instill confidence in our elections and continue to celebrate the remarkable resilience of the American voters in 2020 who made their voices heard. You can use our [mis- and disinformation graphic series](#) on social media to help get out the right message

LWVUS Joins Supreme Court Amicus Opposing Medicaid Work Requirements

2/25/2021

WASHINGTON—Late Wednesday, the League of Women Voters of the United States joined partners, including the National Women’s Law Center, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and law firm Holland & Knight LLP, in filing an amicus brief in support of plaintiffs in a trio of U.S. Supreme Court cases challenging the imposition of work requirements on Medicaid recipients.

“As an organization with a 100-year-long history advocating for accessible and equitable healthcare for all, the League of Women Voters is proud to join this lawsuit opposing work requirements for Medicaid recipients,” said Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, board president of the League of Women Voters of the United States. “The data show that Medicaid work requirements severely harm women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear the cruelty of tying essential social benefits to employment. This must change.”

Medicaid demonstration waivers offer states an avenue to test new approaches that differ from what is federally required. These programs can provide flexibility in operation, which make them beneficial to the applicable communities. The three cases, *Cochran v. Gresham*, *Cochran v. Philbrick*, and *Arkansas v. Gresham*, challenge the United States Department of Health and Human Services' approval of Medicaid demonstration projects in Arkansas and New Hampshire that impose work requirements as a condition for receiving these Medicaid benefits.

The League of Women Voters is joined in this case by a broad coalition of 52 organizations, including good government groups, reproductive justice groups, LGBTQ rights organizations, domestic violence prevention groups, and other women's rights organizations.

Observer Corps Opportunities

The League Board again invites the membership to participate in the civic life of our area by observing one or more of the following. Please email comments from these observations to Mariellen Boomhower at lwvschenectady@gmail.com. Last month's Bulletin contained information about town board meetings and this month's Bulletin highlights information about Schenectady County School Districts and the Library Board.

Schenectady City School Board

The Board of Education meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00. Meeting schedules are on the website. To view a live meeting click on Board of Ed at the bottom of the site page, click on meeting schedule, click on "Board Docs", and then click on "Regular Board Meeting." Usually, the link to the upcoming meeting can be found there or in "Upcoming Events" toward the end of the website. Recorded meetings can also be accessed on the first page of the website.

Niskayuna School Board

Go to School Board meetings on the district website where the regular and special meeting calendar is listed. Click on live stream where the password is listed. Comments submitted will be read at the meeting.

Scotia School Board

The meeting calendar as well as the agenda are listed on the District web site. Meetings are held on Mondays at 7:00. Check the website for Monday dates where you can click on the calendar date and see a video recording of prior meetings, or just prior to a meeting you will see a link to the upcoming meeting.

Mohonasen School Board

Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Mondays and alternate between instructional presentations and business meetings. Meeting videos, Meeting schedules and Agendas are posted on the website. To watch a streamed meeting go to the website to view News and you will see a link stating "watch live Board of Education meeting" just prior to the upcoming meeting.

Schalmont School Board

Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7:00 PM. Agendas are posted on the website. The first page of the website clearly states "how to attend BOE meetings virtually using Google Meet". The public can call in using the listed phone number and pin.

Duanesburg School Board

Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 6:30. Agendas, materials and board minutes are posted on "Board Docs". Meetings can be joined using "Google Meet".

Schenectady County Library Board

Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:00. The meetings agendas and calendar as well as a zoom link to the meetings are to be found at the following site. <http://scpl.schdy.org/>

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, 2021 - June 30, 2022

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 _____

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