



## Letter from the President

February 2023

Dear LWVSC Friends,

February has arrived with good news of the second consecutive passage of the NYS ERA Amendment on January 24, 2023, by the NYS Legislature. This means it has passed its second hurdle and will now be brought to New Yorkers for ratification on the 2024 ballot. We still have work to do as we want to make sure that the public is educated about the amendment and ready to vote in favor, but we can still celebrate this huge step forward. Congratulations!

February is a good month for reflection and perhaps that's why the League of Women Voters chooses to set this month aside for LWV Program Planning. We'll be having our own planning meeting on February 9th – look for more details in this Bulletin. For those who are new to the League, "...Program planning is the grassroots process of recommending and selecting governmental issues for study and agreement in reaching a position. The program is the education and advocacy platform that we adopt to move our mission forward..." (*LWV United States*). At our meeting we will review last year's program, add new plans for the upcoming year, remove items that are no longer pertinent, and update any position we want to keep.

Once the program is selected it will be published for all LWVSC members as a "proposed program", and our membership will have a chance to comment before voting on the program at our Annual Meeting in June. We hope you will consider attending our program planning meeting and sharing an excellent potluck supper with us as well.

You will find last year's program in this issue of the Bulletin for your review. See pages 5 and 6. Please don't hesitate to ask questions or comment in the meantime ([ash.lwvsc@gmail.com](mailto:ash.lwvsc@gmail.com)).

In League,

Ann Hatke

### SAVE THE DATE:

In order to better understand the NYS ERA Amendment and learn more about its history, we have invited Union College professor Andrea Foroughi to speak at a community forum to be held on Thursday, March 9. Professor Foroughi is an authority on the ERA and it should be a very interesting and timely presentation. More details to follow soon!

## SAVE THE DATE!

- ~Have you ever wanted to learn more about how LWVSC plans its program (positions on issues) each year?
- ~Would you like to be a part of the planning?
- ~You are invited to attend the annual LWVSC Program Planning Meeting and Pot-Luck Supper on Thursday, February 9.
- ~This is a great opportunity to meet fellow League members and learn more about the League itself.

Annual Program Planning Meeting  
Thursday, February 9  
6:00 pm

Please RSVP to Ann Hatke at [ash.lwvsc@gmail.com](mailto:ash.lwvsc@gmail.com)

*~ Please bring your favorite dish to share ~*

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|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>President</i>       | <i>Ann Hatke</i>         |
| <i>Vice President</i>  | <i>OPEN</i>              |
| <i>Secretary</i>       | <i>Heide Westergaard</i> |
| <i>Bulletin Editor</i> | <i>Nicole Salamone</i>   |

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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”*

### What are the Legislative “Hot Topics” in 2023?

LWV New York State and LWV Albany County held a virtual forum on January 21, “Legislative HOT Topics”. It was an energizing presentation, but many of us weren’t able to attend. If you’d like to catch up on what was discussed, the recording from the zoom event can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/-hPV2R7KhHo>

If you have difficulty opening this link, copy it and paste it into your address bar on your screen, and it should open easily for you.

### LWVNYS Leaders and Experts

#### Election Issues:

Erica Smitka, Legislative Director, [erica@lwvny.org](mailto:erica@lwvny.org)

Kate Doran, [kateadoran@gmail.com](mailto:kateadoran@gmail.com)

Campaign Finance Reform: Sally Robinson, [sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com)

LWVNYS VP for Advocacy: Sally Robinson [sally.s.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:sally.s.robinson@gmail.com)

Healthcare: Judy Esterquest, [esterquest@gmail.com](mailto:esterquest@gmail.com)

#### Criminal Justice Co-Chairs:

Richard Rifkin, [Richardrifkin54@gmail.com](mailto:Richardrifkin54@gmail.com)

Vivione Marshal, [vivione@lwvnyc.org](mailto:vivione@lwvnyc.org)

#### Equality of Opportunity and Medical Aid in Dying:

Barb Thomas, [bkoepicust@gmail.com](mailto:bkoepicust@gmail.com)

Rural Issues: Kathy Stein, [kstein1@twcny.rr.com](mailto:kstein1@twcny.rr.com)

#### Chair of Energy, Agriculture and the Environment Committee:

Beth Radow, [enradow@radowlaw.com](mailto:enradow@radowlaw.com)

Education Finance: Marian Bott, [sydneymab@aol.com](mailto:sydneymab@aol.com)

Court Reform: Laura Ladd Bierman, [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org)

Executive Director: Laura Ladd Bierman, [laura@lwvny.org](mailto:laura@lwvny.org)

Please note: If you are interested in learning more about any of these LWVNYS committees or would like to join, please contact the person listed for that committee.

## Did you miss it?

**“Religious Medical Systems and Bodily Autonomy”  
was held virtually on January 12th.**

**This presentation was co-hosted by the Capital Region Leagues along  
with the national organization, Compassion and Choices.  
It was a thought-provoking discussion about the acquisition of secular  
medical institutions and systems by religious organizations. What  
does it mean for you?**

**If you missed this important program, you can view it now on:**

**<https://youtu.be/qsdGF7IAJ2M>**

If you have trouble opening the link, copy and paste it to your computer address bar.

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The League of Women Voters of New York State has a new address:

The Blake  
1 Steuben Place  
Albany, NY 12207  
518-465-4162 (no change)  
<http://www.lwvny.org> (no change)

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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, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

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.

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## **League of Women Voters of Schenectady County Local Program 2022-2023**

### **Justice and the Law**

Support improvements to the local criminal justice system by:

- \* Monitoring and strengthening the Probation and Parole procedures, with an emphasis on rehabilitation and supportive services with programs such as the Ex-Offender Re-Entry Program in Schenectady County
- \* Facilitating the implementation of alternative courts (problem solving courts) in Schenectady County and promoting collaborations to support them
- \* Monitoring the juvenile justice system including Family Court and promoting community-based rehabilitation
- \* Supporting restorative justice programs such as the Center for Community Justice
- \* Improve accessibility to police complaint procedure
- \* Improve Mental Health Crisis Intervention
- \* Support the efforts of the Schenectady Police Reform and Re-invention Collaborative
- \* Support the monitoring of the Schenectady County Jail, including complaint resolution, public health measures, transparency, and greater oversight of day-to-day conditions

### **Local Government**

- \* Monitor activities of county governmental units, including town boards, the Schenectady City Council and the Schenectady County Legislature, monitor activities of other quasi-governmental units, public authorities and agencies such as Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority, Metroplex, IDAs and Planning Boards monitor activities of elected public Boards of Education
- \* Support standards of high professional qualifications and political nonpartisanship in manager form of government
- \* Evaluate opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation and examine options for the consolidation of governmental services in Schenectady County

### **Children at Risk**

- \* Collaborate with other organizations to identify the needs of children, including physical and mental health, in Schenectady County, facilitate programs on their behalf and educate the community about their needs and challenges
- \* Study early childhood education and care-giving needs in Schenectady County from a policy and financing perspective
- \* Support greater coordination between child service agencies

## **Local Education**

- \* Monitor local initiatives related to schools and promote and advocate adequate and equitable funding for all school districts so the students can reach their potential
- \* Ensure school districts are adequately prepared and staffed for virtual education
- \* Observe disparities exposed by the need for virtual education
- \* Bolster public schools' ability to respond to needs of students
- \* Ensure that all school districts in Schenectady County are actively seeking to hire teachers of color

## **Environmental Issues**

Support the protection of environmental resources, land, water and air in Schenectady County:

- \* Advocate for the protection of water resources in the County
- \* Promote understanding of global climate emergency and support efforts to mitigate its effects.
- \* Support energy conservation and development of renewable energy alternatives
- \* Support solid waste management programs that increase reuse and recycling in the County and City

## **Health Services**

- \* Educate and advocate for national/state/local health care reform that provides quality physical and mental health care for all citizens
- \* Encourage and support countywide comprehensive health care planning and access, equity, and safety in health care
- \* Educate about the Ellis and St. Peter's merger and its impact on end-of-life procedures

*Approved June 2022*