



January 2023

Letter from the President

Dear LWVSC Friends,

First, let me wish you a most happy and healthy New Year. It seems like there are many signs that 2023 will be a banner year. For example, there are two important pieces of legislation that will be closely followed in 2023 – a possible amendment to the NYS Constitution solidifying Equal Rights for certain groups that are not currently protected, and a possible passage of the NYS Medical Aid in Dying Act which has been stalled for several years. The League of Women Voters is in firm support of both these positions.

NYS legislators passed the Equal Rights Amendment in June 2022; before it becomes standard Constitutional law, however, it must be passed again in 2023, and then approved by vote of New York State citizens in 2024. Currently, the NYS Constitution only protects against racial and religious discrimination. The new ERA would expand protections for sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and will include gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, and will protect personal reproductive autonomy and reproductive healthcare. LWVSC member *Joan Fucillo* will represent our League on the LWVNYS ERA taskforce that will become active in January.

The Medical Aid in Dying Act has been slow to achieve passage in the NYS Legislature. This Act would legalize a medical practice that allows a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less, to request a prescription from their doctor that they can decide to self-ingest to die peacefully in their sleep. *Compassion and Choices*, a national organization that supports end of life autonomy, is partnering with LWVSC and all other capital region Leagues to provide community forums, advocacy, and information at public events beginning in January.

Please watch for details, dates, and registrations for upcoming events for these and other activities.

In League,

Ann Hatke  
President

Citizenship Mentoring Group Report

We’ve had some great news! For the fifth year in a row, we have received a national grant from LWV to support our program. Thank you to our dedicated tutors, helpers, volunteers, and especially our immigrant and refugee students who work so hard to become US citizens.

**Upcoming Activities in 2023:**

- In support of the passage of the Medical Aid in Dying Act:  
**Thursday, January 12 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm** - “Religious Medical Systems and Bodily Autonomy” – Panel Discussion; presented via Zoom; (Capital Region Leagues-sponsored event)  
**Registration required:**  
<https://compassionandchoices.org/in-your-state/new-york/nywintertour2223>  
Please visit site to register for our event and to view additional activities in January
- **Saturday, January 21 10:30 am** – LWV Capital Region Leagues Legislation Season Topics for 2023; presented via Zoom; LWNYS will present an overview of upcoming legislation; further details will be announced
- **February / TBA** - Annual Program Planning Meeting for all LWVSC Members
- **Spring / TBA** – LWVSC Community Forum on ERA; further details will be announced
- **June 2 – 4, 2023** – LWV New York State Convention; Crown Plaza Hotel in Albany; registration for this in-person event to come in February

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)



<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>

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”**

Welcome two new members!

**New member Kate Rose**

Kate is retired from the New York State Employees retirement System. She is currently active singing with the Octavo Singers, the Thursday Music club and her church choir. Kate is also an usher at Proctors theater.

She and her husband enjoy traveling, especially taking cruises.

Kate joined the LWV because she believes in it's mission and likes it's non partisan approach. She is very interested in working on voter services.

**New Member Paula Shaw**

Paula is a past member of the LWV. She is a violin and viola teacher. She is a member of Trio Capriccio. The group performed at the fall LWV cocktail party. She is a member of the Schenectady Unitarian church where she is co-chair of the Green Sanctuary. Paula is also a member of NYUJJ (New York State Unitarian Universalist Justice), an advocacy organization. This year she participated in UU the vote, a group that sent out post cards urging people to vote.

Paula will participate in LWV activities as her time permits.



Ann Hatke and Pauline Kinsella decorated our LWVSC Christmas tree for the Festival of Trees at the Schenectady Historical Society. Looking good ladies!

# PASSING THE NYS EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

## THE PROBLEM

### **Our state constitution does not protect all of us.**

Our New York State Constitution is wholly inadequate when it comes to ensuring equality. We need a constitution with broad protections for every New Yorker.

## THE SOLUTION

### **Pass a constitutional Equal Rights Amendment.**

The good news is we are already on the path to expanding equal protection for all New Yorkers. In 2022, the legislature passed a state constitutional amendment that creates new protections in our constitution against discrimination based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, and sex — including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive health care and autonomy.

The current New York State Constitution fails to prohibit discrimination against groups who have been historically targeted, including those with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, immigrants, women, and pregnant people.

### **We must pass an equal rights amendment worthy of the 21st century that protects us all.**

Because our constitution requires all constitutional amendments to pass the legislature twice before giving the public the opportunity to vote on the measure, we must pass the amendment again in 2023 so that it can appear on the 2024 ballot.

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### **Adding an Equal Rights Amendment to our state constitution would:**

- broadly prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, or sex including pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, reproductive

health care and autonomy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

- explicitly include language to clarify that discrimination based on a person’s pregnancy or pregnancy outcome is sex discrimination – this is crucial given the national trend of criminalizing people for various pregnancy outcomes, as well as the Supreme Court’s overturning of Roe v. Wade.
- ensure comprehensive and inclusive equal protections that will guard against attacks on our rights from the federal government or federal judges, including threats to the legal equality of LGBTQI+ people.

**The New York State Constitution is a foundational document that defines our fundamental rights. We must fight to ensure it reflects and protects all of us - and that means passing the Equal Rights Amendment in 2023, so that voters can adopt it in 2024.**

**URGE LAWMAKERS TO PASS A BROAD AND INCLUSIVE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT AGAIN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION.**

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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