



President's Letter

It's August, it feels like summer is just zipping by. So, let's make the most of it! And let's get together for a potluck picnic on the 29th.

We are a small League, but a mighty one. We have a 100-year history of service, and we're only getting better.

In the past two years, our numbers have grown. Our new members are enthusiastic about our mission, and they dove right in. They've brought fresh ideas and ways of seeing things. Their commitment to our community and to the public interest is invaluable to our League and to our work. Thank you!

We have a busy fall ahead of us: We received a Youth Civic Education grant from the national League to bring civics information to high schools and community colleges. We are expanding our partnerships with those who work with underserved populations—at pop-up food pantries in Scotia-Glenville, GED classes in Schenectady, and Sycamore Collaborative's summer lunch program. The goal (hope) is for our League to conduct some activity on a weekly basis—whether it's a registration drive, a tabling event to engage as many people as possible or handing out bagged lunches—from now until Election Day.

Some wag said, "The first rule of life is showing up."¹ I'd argue this applies to the League as well. Being there is key. If we don't show up, if we think there's not much opportunity for us at this or that event, then we are missing out. Our currency is that the League is a trusted source of information in our community.

Every time we show up, we strengthen that trust.

Joan Fucillo
President



1. There are many variations, including this one: "I think the great danger in life is not showing up." — Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen, Pediatrician and author of *Kitchen Table Wisdom*

To celebrate summer while it's still here . . .



We're having a potluck picnic!

Join us on Saturday, August 29, from noon-5pm at
the Lions Pavilion, Collins Park, Scotia.

Lawn games encouraged.

Directions: From Mohawk Avenue (Rte. 5), turn onto Schonowee Ave., pass Jumpin' Jacks, then turn left onto Kiwanis Way.



RSVP: lwvschenectady@gmail.com

Voter Services Report

The November elections seem like a long way off, but they sneak up on us every year! We've already begun planning candidate forums, under Liz Yanoff's leadership.

Local elections for villages and towns have moved to even-numbered years, while city and county elections will remain in odd-numbered years, but that change won't be fully implemented until 2030. Special elections to fill an unexpired term add another wrinkle.

We'll be holding candidate forums for Scotia/Glenville (Glenville Town Board and Town Justice and Scotia Village Trustees), Rotterdam (Town Supervisor), Niskayuna (Town Supervisor) and Schenectady (City Council special election).

We'll be looking for volunteers to help with the candidate forums. It's a good opportunity to hear the candidates running in your town, village or city.

And, of course, we will continue to do voter registration events to register voters and encourage them to vote. Take a look at the signup sheet at [Voter Registration Signup](#) if you'd like to volunteer. If you know of an organization that would like us to do voter registration, contact me at lwwschenectady@gmail.com

Cheryl Nechamen
Voter Services



Mark Your Calendar



Mark Your Calendar

- Tuesday, August 4 at 6 pm: Youth Civic Education Grant Kickoff with the national League. Register at: [Welcome! You are invited to join a meeting: Civic Education Grant Kickoff. After registering, you wi...](#)
- Monday, August 10 at 6 pm: Q&A on Youth Civic Education Grant with the national League. Register at: [Welcome! You are invited to join a meeting: Civic Education Grant Kickoff Q&A. After registering, yo...](#)
- Wednesday, August 12 at 6 pm: LWVSC Board Meeting at the McChesney Room at the downtown Schenectady Public Library. All members are welcome!

- Wednesday, August 12 at 6 pm: Civilian Police Review Board Meeting at 2nd Floor Courtroom at City Hall, 105 Jay Street., members of the public are welcome to attend
- Saturday, August 29 from noon to 5 pm: Potluck Picnic in Collins Park, Scotia. RSVP to Joan at lwvschenectady@gmail.com
- Tuesday, September 15 is National Voter Registration Day. The League will be tabling at various locations that day, so mark your calendar and look for details to come.
- Saturday, October 24: Early Voting Begins
- Tuesday, November 3: General Election Day



Youth Civic Education

We're happy to report that the national League of Women Voters Education fund has awarded us \$750 in funding for our Youth Civic Education.

Our League is planning to shift our in-school outreach focus from registering voters to more general civic education. Right now, among potential voters, 18-24 year olds are least likely to vote. And soon, half of the voting age population will be Gen Z—millennials. If you're excited about the prospect of reaching out to the next generation of voters, contact Joan at lwvschenectady@gmail.com . If you'd like to prepare yourself, the national team has produced a new [Youth Civic Education Toolkit](#) to explore.

You are also welcome to join two Zooms for Leagues that have received these grants. If you register and can't attend, you will receive a recording and resources following the call.

Use the following links to register for the initial trainings:

- August 4th Kickoff - 6 pm ET: [Welcome! You are invited to join a meeting: Civic Education Grant Kickoff. After registering, you wi...](#)
 - August 10th Q&A - 6 pm ET: [Welcome! You are invited to join a meeting: Civic Education Grant Kickoff Q&A. After registering, yo...](#)
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Immigration Issues Report

The current administration continues to hammer away at the US citizenship application process. A recent “adjustment” removes the opportunity to request a Fee Waiver (not pay any application fee) or the Reduced Fee Waiver (only pay a partial application fee). The current application fee is \$760, or \$710 if you apply online. In the past, an applicant could apply for one of the waivers after proving their financial need. For many individuals, the possibility of not paying the fee or only paying part means the difference between applying for citizenship or not. Qualification depended on income below the federal poverty level, proven receipt of a “means tested benefit,” a government benefit such as SNAP, SSI assistance, Medicaid, etc. The validity of an applicant’s need was easily proven by the submission of their most recent IRS forms or actual documents indicating approval for one or more of the government benefits. Many immigrants and refugees who would ordinarily qualify to apply for citizenship can no longer do so because they are unable to pay the \$760.00 fee.

Federal Register - June 23, 2026

The most recent change from USCIS - US Citizenship and Immigration Services - has to do with the issue of “public charge”. During the Biden administration, a

citizenship applicant could successfully become a citizen even if they were receiving a government benefit from a limited list. The Department of Homeland Security has now issued a “final rule” that will allow USCIS officers to assess an application based on their “assumption” that the applicant may become dependent on government benefits once they are allowed to stay in the US. How is a USCIS officer to make an objective decision that the person may (or may not) become a public charge?

Rationales don't usually accompany these changes to procedure. However, this rule stated that “The Trump administration is upholding the rule of law....and safeguarding the safety, security, and financial well-being of Americans.”

USCIS Bulletin - July 17, 2026

*Anne Hatke
Immigration Committee*



JOIN/RENEW

Membership

We have two new members: Sydney Aulisi & Claire Pugliese. Welcome!

Membership Updating:

If you have received an email from me, Ellen Daviero, about needing to update

your membership and would like help please call, text or email and I would be happy to help! My contact information is lwvschenectady@gmail.com I look forward to hearing from you. You can also [log in or sign up here](#) to join or renew online.

Upcoming Projects:

We are currently using the VAN (Voter Activation Network) online database from public voting rolls to do outreach to registered voters who have not voted in the last 2 elections as well as 18- to 30-year-old registered voters who have not voted. Our plan is to create a text message to send to encourage them to vote. after the primary in June.

If you are interested in this project or a postcard project, please reach out to me at lwvschenectady@gmail.com .

*Ellen Daviero
Membership*



League 101: Who Are We?

This sometimes comes up not in the form of a question, but in the form of a statement: “Oh, the League. You register voters, right?”

Yes, but registering voters is only part of what we do. Our mission is much broader. The League promotes informed and active participation in government as essential to a healthy society.

We focus on policy. The League – national, state, and local – supports policies seen as helpful to our nation and our communities. We work to change existing policies and to stop implementation of policies that do not meet that standard.

A common assumption is that policy proposals are split along party lines. The League is nonpartisan. We never oppose or support any political party or candidate for office. Instead, the League supports policies based on League principles and study of the issues. We actively weigh in on policy issues, but our approach is politically neutral.

Our local League was formed at Union College in 1925. Its first task was to conduct a study of city government. The goal was to learn as much as possible about how the city is run, the advantages and disadvantages of the current system, and ways to improve its service to its residents.

One hundred years later, the Schenectady League is still dedicated to good government at the local and state levels. Recently, at the national level, the League has worked with attorneys, joined lawsuits, and organized call-in and letter writing campaigns to oppose policies that interfere with citizens' rights, particularly their right to vote.

Some examples:

1. The SAVE America Act (Safeguard American Voting Eligibility), which would require that new voters register to vote in person at a Board of Elections or other approved government office with a passport or certified birth certificate; it would disenfranchise citizens who lack those documents, including married women or can't provide the (certified) paperwork that proves their names. The League actively opposes this legislation.
2. The US Postal Service introduced a rule to withhold mail-in ballots from citizens in states that did not turn over voter information, which often includes sensitive data, to the federal government. The League

and other voting rights groups have brought lawsuits to stop this. Those that have brought suits are winning in court.

3. Another USPS rule, now in effect, reduced the number of regional processing centers. This has slowed mail delivery, which can affect whether absentee ballots arrive on time. Our League is cautioning people who vote by mail to do so as early as possible.

None of these are good policies. And that's true, no matter which party introduced them.

If you're curious about a topic about the League, please contact me at lwvschenectady@gmail.com to request it as a future League 101 topic.

Katie Beltramo

Bulletin Editor



Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan citizen activist organization that operates at the local, state, and national level. We influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

“Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy”

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