

ChapterSpot/Transformation

Just a reminder that the national League's new membership system, called Transformation on the ChapterSpot platform, is scheduled to launch in the beginning of February. You'll be getting an emailed invitation soon from the national League (LWVUS) to log in and participate in the new system. Please respond to the invitation so our Membership Chair doesn't have to chase you down!

New York State League Positions on Issues

We have an important job to do in February, namely to review the positions that the State League has on various issues. Now, you're asking, what are positions? Basically, a position is the League's stance on a particular issue. One of our bedrock values in the League of Women Voters is that we are a grassroots organization. The Schenectady League is a 501c4 nonprofit which allows us to lobby for or against specific legislation (501c3 nonprofits can only lobby on issues, not specific legislation). In order to lobby for legislation, we need to have a position on that issue. For example, one of the LWNYS positions is *opposition to term limits for members of the NYS Legislature*. So if the State Legislature was considering a bill that would institute term limits for their members, our position would allow us to lobby the Legislature to oppose that bill.

The process by which the League reaches a position is by consensus after debating the pros and cons of an issue. That process is called a study. We'll actually be conducting 2 studies this spring on Ranked Choice Voting and Nonpartisan Primaries and Voting Systems Approval- I'll be talking about that in the March bulletin. Those studies had their origin in 2023, when local Leagues reviewed the positions that the State League currently had in place. Some of the local Leagues pointed out that we had no position on Ranked Choice Voting and therefore could not lobby for or against such a system. Research materials were developed over the next 2 years and in March we'll be debating the pros and cons. So, at a zoom meeting on February 26 at 7 PM, we will review the positions of the New York State LWV. I'll send out the invitation to the zoom meeting by February 12. A summary of the current positions is included in this bulletin on p.2-3. The complete description of State League positions can be found at <https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Impact-on-Issues-2024.pdf>.

In closing, I'd like to include this quote from Jimmy Carter, passed along by Carolyn Jones-Assini: After Jimmy's defeat to President Reagan, he simply told the American People that he would leave the White House and "take up once more the only title in our democracy superior to that of president - the title of citizen."

Cheryl Nechamen

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS LWVNY

ELECTION LAW

Support of measures to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise, including paperless and Election Day registration, no excuse absentee and in-person early voting. Restore integrity to the election process – specifically support for uniformity in election laws and procedures in their implementation and enforcement; promote measures that ensure the integrity of all ballots.

Support comprehensive campaign finance reform, including public financing of campaigns.

Support ballot access and fair campaign practices.

Opposition to term limits for members of the NYS Legislature.

Opposition to term limits for NYS statewide elected officials.

GOVERNMENT

Support of individual liberties, including reproductive rights, voting rights, gun control.

Support of improved measures to provide representation for legislative districts in case of a vacancy.

Support of standards to ensure equitable representation in the State legislature and Congress.

Support of responsive and responsible legislative processes which increase the role of the individual member and the committee system.

Support of effective regulation of lobbying and ethics.

Support of procedural reforms in the constitutional convention process to promote openness and nonpartisanship.

Support of the consolidation of government/shared services when it promotes effective and efficient operation of government.

HEALTH CARE

Support of measures to assure a basic level of quality physical and mental health care, including regulatory incentives to encourage development of cost-effective alternative methods of delivery; funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs; provisions for effective citizen participation in health policy decisions.

Support of measures that enable individuals to assume responsibility for their own health and to participate in decisions, including extraordinary life-extending procedures.

Support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs through public financing with single payer concept as an acceptable approach to implementing League positions on equitable access and cost containment.

JUDICIAL

Support of a unified state court system with improved provisions for judicial selection.

Support of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels to prevent racial and economic profiling.

Support of measures to improve pretrial procedures in the criminal courts.

Support of measures to promote a fair and efficient jury system.

Support the rights of indigent defendants to representation at public expense.

Support of alternatives to incarceration.

Opposition to the death penalty, with life without parole as the primary alternative.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support for protection and management of New York’s natural resources in the public interest, including energy conservation and energy options from renewable sources.

Support for measures to achieve watershed protection including limiting pesticide use and applying Best Management Practices.

Support for a state-established, intergovernmental system for land resource management.

Support for a proactive role for New York State in regional land use planning, containing urban sprawl and protecting sensitive areas.

Support of reconditioning of the New York State Erie/Barge Canal System and its development for recreational uses.

SOCIAL POLICY

Support for equality of opportunity, meeting basic human needs, child care.

Support measures to meet the needs for affordable and accessible housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities.

STATE FINANCES

Support reforms for greater equity in education financing (K-12) for both pupils and taxpayers.

Support raising funds to provide New York’s children with a sound basic education through increases in the New York State personal income tax, implemented in a progressive fashion.

Support for the replacement of the existing local residential property tax relief programs in which relief goes to all with programs based on need, with annual cost of living adjustment.

Oppose in principle the use of public funds to support non-public schools (K-12).

Oppose any increase in the maximum number of charter schools without improvements to the Charter School Act.

Support the funding of public higher education and the existing formula for financing the community system, 1/3 tuition, 1/3 state aid, and 1/3 county support.

Support a uniform equitable assessment and property tax system.

Support of measures to provide for openness and accountability in the operation of the New York State public authority system.

Support of a timely and responsive state budget.

WOMEN’S ISSUES

Support of measures that hold marriage to be an economic partnership with a presumption of equality between the spouses.

Opposition to measures that contain a presumption of joint custody of the children.

Support for equity in employment laws and practices and equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

Support of measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence.

Observer Corps Report

My focus as an Observer Corps member is to monitor the process, accessibility and transparency of the group and its proceedings, as opposed to my personal opinion on particular issues. Sometimes that's a challenge!

Given my extended absence from Rotterdam politics and recent media and social media coverage of two individual board members, I was pleasantly surprised. Here are my notes.

Rotterdam Town Board Meeting

January 8, 2025

Present:

Molly Collins, Joe Mastroianni, Tamny Gallucci, Ron Schlag, Diane Marco, Town Clerk, Courtney Heinel
Attorney

Absent:

Jack Dodson

Agenda:

-One proposed zoning change from agricultural to business. Contractor presented proposal. Hearing followed with one Resident, first time meeting attendee, voicing questions. Board responded and invited Resident to attend future Planning Committee discussions on proposal.

-Two proposed residential zoning changes, one with no discussion

-One proposal for Peter Rd proposed change from Res One single family homes to Res Three multiple family homes for 20 condos. Presentation by engineer for proposed developer, cited possible economic benefit to community. During hearing, several residents, including first time attendees and speakers, voiced concerns about traffic, character of neighborhood, stress on school district.

Developer re-addressed accuracy of concerns over traffic and neighborhood diversity.

Some residents engaged in name calling and cat calls.

At conclusion of Hearings, Board offered an explanation of the process of zoning change with public hearing and privilege of the floor.

At end of meeting, demonstrating approachability and accessibility, Board took the time to respond to specific questions posed by residents during Hearing.

Cindy Weissend

Observer Corps

COMMUNITY MEETING

Join us to discuss creating a Community Reuse Center in the Capital District.

Let's take the first step in creating a reuse network in our Region!

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025

5:30 PM Refreshments - 6:00 PM Meeting

**Schenectady County Public Library
McChesney Room
99 Clinton Street Schenectady**

RSVP below or at tinyurl.com/CDREUSE24

Please take our survey here:

<https://tinyurl.com/CDReUseSurvey>

SCAN HERE TO RSVP



ZEROWASTECD.ORG



A Reuse Center is a place to bring items you no longer want and buy things that you need including furniture, construction supplies, household items, and clothing. It's a community destination for education, upcycling & workforce development. And it's just the beginning...

**LET'S KEEP REUSABLE,
REPAIRABLE ITEMS
OUT OF THE LANDFILL!**

Report from Civilian Police Review Board

I officially started in June with the Schenectady Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) and did the training in July and August. I've been able to attend all the meetings. We didn't have any cases over the summer and didn't have a quorum in September. By the end of September, the CPRB board was finally fully filled. We have been having productive meetings since October.

We've reviewed cases, met with different officers about police programs and met with Chief Clifford in December. The CPRB board is working with the Police Department on materials to educate our community about what the Board does and to make sure the complaint form is accessible to all. We are working on literature about CPRB and a presentation. Both are in very early draft forms but I did volunteer LWV to be one of the first groups we ask to present to once we are ready.

At our December meeting Chief Clifford asked if we could help with pushing the Mayor to get the complaint forms available in other languages starting with Spanish. We are working on that now and sent a letter this month. I'm enjoying the assignment and am learning a lot about Schenectady. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the League of Women Voters.

Megan Haessig
LWV Representative to CPRB

Voter Services Committee Report: LWVUS Education Fund Youth Voter Registration Grant

We've begun putting our grant to work.

Julia, Ellen and Joan met with student adviser Pam DiMezza and 10 student leaders at Schenectady High School to talk about the League, voting rights, voter registration and the importance of voting locally. We'll be back on campus March 5 and 6 and work with student leaders to register young voters. Ellen has contacted Mohonasen High School. We hope to meet with them soon and implement a similar youth voter registration plan.

We are also working with the food pantries at SCCC and FMCC. We contacted the schools after reading the Daily Gazette's report on hunger among community college students—and their families—and will hold voter registrations during pantry hours. While not student-led initiatives, this outreach satisfies the spirit of the grant: meeting marginalized people where they are and making sure they know that voting is their right, their voices are needed, and, particularly in local elections, their voices will be heard. And, please, check the volunteer sign-up sheet at [Voter registration](#). We are starting to add more VR events.

Joan Fucillo

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<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Joan Fucillo</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”

