



The

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024
LOCAL VOTER
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA

Syracuse Metro LWV
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State: www.lwvny.org
National: www.lwv.org

LWVSYR FIRST WEDNESDAY
LUNCH & LEARN AT NOON

January 3, 2024
11:30AM-1:00PM*

WHAT IS DEI?

Rotary International has a global DEI initiative and local CNY Rotary Clubs have a committee that visits those clubs and does a presentation on the topic.

Rotarian **Cheryl Matt** (our Events Coordinator) and Rotarian **Jonathan Yost** will present the Rotary’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program to our members and guests. The presentation will include how we can talk about thing in a productive way so everyone feels comfortable sharing. There will be a review of definitions of terms and some action items to take away. Also, they will cover how we can all do better moving forward and why embracing DEI is important to the future of any organization.

LWVSYR FIRST WEDNESDAY
LUNCH & LEARN AT NOON

February 7, 2024
11:30AM-1:00PM*

REVIEW OF LWVUS POSITIONS

Members of the Syracuse LWV will review current positions to aid in the goal of the LWVUS Program Planning process. Leagues across the country will be sharing their thoughts and ideas. This helps achieve collective agreement around how the league will move their mission forward for the next two years.

Suggested changes to the LWVUS Program will be brought to the National LWV Board for possible adoption at the National Convention in June 2024.

More information on Program Planning on Page 4

BOTH MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE AT:

Tully’s Restaurant
2943 Erie Blvd. East
Syracuse NY 13224

**Wait staff will be available to take lunch orders at 11:30 so we can begin our meetings promptly at Noon. As always the public is invited to all League Events.*



January 3, Lunch & Learn—DEI
Tully’s Restaurant

January 11, LWVSYR Board Mtg.
via Zoom

Jan. 16, Medical Aid in Dying
Lobby Day, Albany

Feb. 3, Legislative Hot Tops Virtual
Meeting. See page 6 to register.

Feb. 7, Lunch & Learn- Review of
LWVUS Positions
Tully’s Restaurant

Feb. 8, LWVNY Board Mtg.
Via Zoom

Mar. 6 , Lunch & Learn- Breaking
the Barriers to voting and curbing
the influence of money in politics.
Tully’s Restaurant

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BOARD NOTES

2024 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is preparing to build a slate of candidates for positions on the LWV Syracuse Board of Directors that come to term in June 2024. Our work will go into full swing on January 3, 2024, when a survey will be emailed to all current Board members inquiring about their desire to continue serving the league in their current position. Replies must be sent by January 22 so that the committee has time to compile and discuss the results at their meeting on January 25. It is at this time that we will determine what positions will need to be filled in June and start contacting people to see if they are interested in filling them.

If you have an interest about serving on the board or have questions about becoming more involved in the league, please contact Sarah C. O'Neill, Chairperson of the LWV Syracuse Nominating Committee for 2023-24, at sarahcbittel@gmail.com

Do you know a student who would be interested?



Students Inside Albany (SIA) is a conference sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation. Inc. The program is designed to increase students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

The conference is interactive and brings together high school students from across the state to learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy-making arena. While in Albany, the students will have an opportunity to tour the state's capitol. The highlight for most students is the opportunity to shadow their senators and their assemblymembers for an afternoon attending session on the Chamber floors.

Happy
New
Year

Officers

Leadership Team

Joan Durant
Margrit Diehl
Roberta Millert
Amanda Slisz

Secretary
Treasurer

Dona Wonacott
Roberta Millert

Directors

Education
Program/ Issues & Advocacy

Margrit Diehl
Margaret Chase
Dorothy Wrase Hares
Robin Brown-Bolewski

Membership
Voter Service

Joan Durant
Mary Kuhn
Cheryl Matt

Events
Social Media
Publications
DEI
Development

Chanel Turnquest
Joan Johnson
Karen Chisholm
Ellyn Lentz

Off-Board Positions

Budget Director
Healthcare Specialist
Issues & Advocacy Advocate

Kathy Zabinski
Dorothy Wrase Hares
Kim Margosian

Nominating Committee

Linda Alario
Trymeter Carter
Sarah O'Neill
*Dorothy Wrase Hares
*Ellyn Lentz

*Board Members

LWV Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, and communities and policy making in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

LWVUS Program Planning – Preparing for the 2024 Convention

Every two years prior to the biennial convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States, local leagues are asked to review “Impact on Issues”, the League’s public policy positions; how they interrelate; and how they complement and reinforce state and local issues.

At our First Wednesday Luncheon, on February 7, 2024, we will review the current LWVUS positions to aid in the goal of the LWVUS Program Planning process.

LWVUS Public Policy Positions include:

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT – *Promoting an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.*

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – *Promoting peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.*

NATURAL RESOURCES – *Promoting an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of national resources in the public interest.*

SOCIAL POLICY – *Securing equal rights and equal opportunities for all by promoting social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.*

To review the complete document, go to lww.org/Impact on Issues.



Fall was a very busy season for Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote

< Nottingham High School Students Registration Event

55 candidates ran for office in Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse. All 55 candidates were asked to provide information on VOTE411 that would help voters make educated voting decisions. 45% responded.

- Volunteers from the LWV and 6 other local organizations went into 34 classrooms in the Syracuse School District High Schools to educate (GOTV) and register voters.
- Volunteers registered voters, provided absentee ballot applications and voter education at the Justice Center and Jamesville Correctional Facility.
- Volunteers monitored 12 Syracuse Tenant Association elections.
- Volunteers attended 7 Naturalization Ceremonies providing education and voter registration.

THANK YOU ALL for continuing to support Empowering Voters & Defending Democracy.

Joan Durant & Mary Kuhn,
Voter Service Directors

OCC Naturalization Ceremony >



New York State Congressional Redistricting



Once again Congressional lines in New York State are back in the hands of the State's Redistricting Commission. On December 12, 2023, with a 4-3 vote, the Court of Appeals, ruled that the Commission must now submit new maps to the state legislature by February 28, 2024.

The fight over New York's congressional districts began in 2022 when the commission failed to come up with a plan. In May of 2022, a trial court ordered new maps be drawn by a "special master." These maps were used in the November 2022 congressional election. A lawsuit challenged the maps and after a lower court decision, the case ended up in the Court of Appeals, New York's highest court.

Locally this means that central New York Congressional Districts could look different since we last voted in 2023 for our congressional member. It also could decide whether Democrats or Republicans will control the House of Representatives in 2025.

Moving Local Elections in NYS To Even - Numbered Years

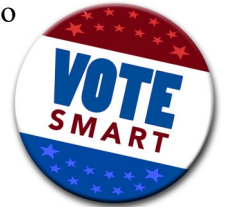
In the final hours of the 2023 NYS Legislative Session, both the democratic controlled Senate and the Assembly passed legislation to move several local elections to even-numbered years. This would synchronize them with state and federal races.

The measure would include elections for town supervisor, county executive and some other local positions. It would not affect city elections or certain local posts such as county district attorney which are held on odd-numbered years under terms of the state constitution.

Supporters of the legislation say moving these posts to even-numbered years would increase voter turnout. Republican lawmakers accuse the sponsors of playing politics with higher-turnout presidential election years which could favor democrats.

Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on December 22, 2023.

The New York State League of Women Voters does not have a position on the legislation.



Update New York's Public Finance Program

During the 2019 legislative session the Assembly and Senate passed a budget bill that established a commission charged with creating a small donor public financing program for statewide and state legislative offices. The Governor signed it into law and state leaders appointed commissioners.

The program allows statewide and state office candidates to access public matching funds based on qualified small-donor donations from constituents.

During the final days of the 2023 legislative session a bill revising the program was rushed through and passed. It would change the public financing law in ways that will undermine the program's core objective of empowering small donors. Instead of matching the contributions up to \$250, this bill would allow the first \$250 of all contributions to be matched, taking away the power from small donors. The bill was passed by a close margin and votes were whipped on the floor. It was initially passed 32 to 31 in the Senate, but votes were changed after to widen the margin a bit. The League along with several other good government groups called for the Governor to veto the bill. She must act on it before the end of the year.

The League of Women Voters of the United States and New York State have long lobbied for campaign finance reform that reaffirms the right to equal access to the political process for candidates that should be enhanced by supporting measures which would open the system to challengers by enacting a public financing law for all.



New York State Presidential Primary Tuesday, April 2, 2024

- February 14, 2024: Last day to change party enrollment for both the April and June Primaries. The voter registration form should be used to change your party enrollment from one party to another or to enroll in a party for the first time. Please remember that New York State is a closed primary state and you can only vote in a Primary if you are enrolled in a party and the party of your choice. Changes made in your party status on or after February 15 will not be in effect until the November General Election.
- March 23, 2024: Last day voter registration must be received by the BOE by mail or in person.
- April 1, 2024: Last day to apply in person for an absentee ballot.
- April 2, 2024: Last day to postmark ballot. The ballot must be received by the BOE by April 9, 2024.
- April 2, 2024: Last day to deliver an absentee ballot in person to your local Board of Elections or to any poll site in your county.

Early Voting—March 23-30, 2024



Presidential Primaries and Caucuses

In the first decade of the 1900's states began to hold primary elections in order to reform how we choose our presidents. The reason being too often voters felt that conventions ignored the will of individual citizens. Until then, presidential candidates were nominated by elite and influential party officials without any input from the American people. Primaries and caucuses are two ways that people help states and political parties choose presidential nominees.

Most states hold primaries 6-9 months before a presidential election. Primary voters choose their preferred candidate anonymously by casting secret ballots. The state where the primary is held takes the results of the vote into account to award delegates to the winners.

Several states hold caucuses in the months leading up to a presidential election. Caucuses are meetings run by political parties that are held at the county, district, or precinct level. Some caucuses choose candidates by secret ballot. Others require participants to divide themselves into groups according to the candidate they support. Undecided participants form their own group. Each candidate's group gives speeches and tries to get the others to join their group.

Depending on state and political party rules, primaries and caucuses can be open, closed or some hybrid of the two:

- In an open primary or caucus, voters do not have to be registered with a political party to take part in its primary or caucus.
- In a closed primary or caucus, only voters registered with that party can take part and vote.
- In a semi—open or semi-closed primary or caucus, variations of the two main types are used.

States and political parties use different methods for deciding how many delegates they will award to each candidate.

LWVNYS UPCOMING EVENTS

Regional Training Workshops

All members are invited to attend the regional training workshops in March. A full agenda and registration form will be available in early January. The workshops are held on Saturdays in March from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm with lunch provided. Mark your calendar now to join us, network with League friends, meet new League friends, and learn more to strengthen your League and your own actions.

Topics will include: GOTV and the 2024 Elections, NYS ERA, Advocacy and Legislative Session Update, Telling Our Story through Data, Strengthening our DEI, Engaging College Students in their Communities, Membership and Leadership Issues, Mis and Dis-information in the 2024 Election. Locations and dates are:

March 2 Regional Training Workshops in Rochester
March 9 Regional Training Workshops in Port Washington
March 16 Regional Training Workshops in Cortland
March 23 Regional Training Workshops in Albany

For more information or if you are interested in attending please contact Amanda Slisz at agslisz@gmail.com. We will try to help arrange carpools as it gets closer and know the number of attendees.

Advocacy Events

January 16 In-person Lobby Day in Albany with Compassion and Choice to support Medical Aid in Dying
May 7 League Advocacy Day (speakers and materials with in-person lobbying in Albany)

February 3 Legislative Hot Topics Event:
10:00AM Join the State League's topic specialists for a virtual event about the 2024 legislative session. This program will take a look at how the New York State League adopts and takes action on issues and sets legislative priorities. We will also introduce the various state topic specialists, how members can get engaged in their work, and what the expected hot topics are for the 2024 legislative session.

To register, contact Laura@lwvny.org

March 6, 2024 Lunch & Learn



11:30 AM-1:00PM

Tully's Restaurant

2943 Erie Boulevard East, Syracuse 13224

Topic: How to increase representation in government by breaking the barriers to voting and curbing the influence of money in politics.

Speaker: Christine Wood—Ms. Wood serves as a Co-Director for the Public Citizen Declaration for American Democracy. Prior to this role, she served as the Field Director for the Coalition, where she spearheaded their grassroots organizing work.

Please note all our meetings are open to the public.

November 1, 2023 Lunch & Learn Meeting.

Our guest speaker Robert Harding, from the Auburn Citizen newspaper, spoke to us about political reporting, the media and the challenges of fact checking. Harding does true investigative reporting and is one of the most trusted sources in CNY.

We had a large turnout both in person and online.

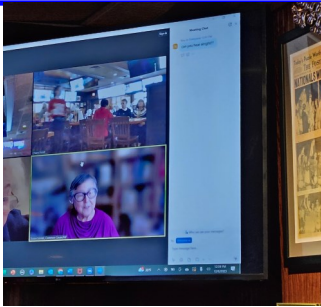


December 6, 2023 Lunch & Learn Meeting

Our speaker for our December Lunch & Learn series was Susan Lerner, the Executive Director of Common Cause New York. Common Cause is dedicated to empowering and protecting the voice of the people in our political process by promoting equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all. There are chapters in 35 states.

Ms. Lerner explained redistricting and discussed the ramifications of the lawsuits that have clogged the courts. There were lots of questions from attendees, on that and

other topics. The presentation was very well received and we filled the back room at Tully's.



*"Diversity is the one true thing
we all have in common..."
Celebrate it every day."*

Winston Churchill



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
 SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA
 PO BOX 11862
 SYRACUSE NY 13218**

January/February 2024



**Syracuse Metropolitan Area League of Women (*and Men*) Voters
 Membership or Renewal Form**

Join the LWVSYRMA as a member:

_____ \$60.00 Individual _____ \$85.00 Family * _____ Student (full time student 16 years and older free)
 (Annual Membership—July 1—June 30)

And or Show your SUPPORT for LWVSYRMA by donating:

\$ _____ LWVSYR gifts support our local general operation fund
 \$ _____ LWVNYS Education Foundation (tax-deductible) gifts support our local educational efforts (ask your employer if they have a Matching Gift Program that will double or triple your donation)

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ ZIP _____ PHONE: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____
 Email _____ Date _____

*Family Membership two in same household
 Please mail your check payable to: Syracuse Metro LWV, PO Box 11862, Syracuse NY 13218 or
 pay by Pay Pal at www.lwvsyr.org

THANK YOU

