



Letter from the President – December 2023/January 2024

Dear LWWSC Friends,

A new month, a new year, and much to be thankful for - best wishes for a most happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year to you! And what an important year it will be...

One responsibility every Local League has at this time of year is to prepare a list of their top three Legislative Priorities and report them to LWWNYS. This isn't an easy task - there are so many issues that we are all confronting that narrowing them down to three makes for a very thought-provoking and lively discussion. LWWNYS assembles these reports and based on the results decides which issues need advocacy in the upcoming 2024 Legislature. These are the LWWSC priorities listed in our report:

1. **Energy and Climate Change**, including climate emergency decisions based on the best and most current climate science available; funding to facilitate the State's transitions to green energy; enforcement of laws that address hazardous waste; banning of single-use plastics and creation of alternatives; support for regenerative agriculture, local farms and community gardens; support for local recycling and composting; priority funding given to communities already at risk due to past and present climate changes.
2. **Public Education**, including greater access to broadband; greater response to the unequal needs of students; continued adequate and equitable educational funding; more training for teachers, students and parents in virtual learning; focus on gaps in student progress; attention to student mental and emotional issues with appropriate remediation; financial incentives to attract teachers (for example, educational loan forgiveness after specified years of service); greater attention to safety in schools, assuring that all students, teachers, staff, and administrators are provided a safe environment.
3. **Immigration**, including expansion of resources to support accommodations such as housing, food security, healthcare, clothing, and safety, without reducing similar resources and services to the poor and low-income members already in our community; additional resources to provide legal and timely assistance as requested; expedite process to obtain employment; expedite legal process for those seeking asylum in the US.

4. **Comprehensive Healthcare**, including improving public health systems to address mental and physical issues; greater coordination among local, state, and national health systems; promote accessible, affordable, equitable, and quality healthcare with special attention to underserved communities.

Didn't I say we send in only our top three priorities? Absolutely! However, each year we try to add an additional statement that we feel is worthy of attention and advocacy, so that's why you're seeing a fourth priority listed. Let's hope that these topics receive the attention and advocacy they deserve.

In League,

Ann Hatke
President
LWV Schenectady County

Change Coming for Local Elections

Governor Hochul recently signed a bill moving some local elections, previously held in odd-numbered years, to even-numbered years. The rationale behind the bill was that presidential and gubernatorial elections, held in even-numbered years, see a much higher voter turnout than that seen in local elections.

As League members, we know how important local elections are- these are the elected officials most accessible to voters, legislating on issues that affect us on a daily basis. So, in that regard, this may be a good move, if it means more people voting for local officials.

The new law will not affect all local elections. Elections in cities and villages and races for county clerk, sheriff, district attorney and judges will remain in odd-numbered years. This will change the League's approach to scheduling candidate forums. We might end up holding forums every year since we cover elections in the city of Schenectady and the village of Scotia (odd-numbered years) and the towns of Rotterdam, Glenville and Niskayuna (even-numbered years).

We should be getting guidance from the State League soon, including when the law will take effect.

Cheryl Nechamen
Voting Services Chair

Regional LWVNYS Training Workshop Dates

In years when there is no State Convention, the state League organizes training workshops in four locations around the state, including in Albany, during the month of March. All members are invited to attend the workshops so mark your calendars now! In Albany, the training will be held on Saturday, March 23 from 10:00 to 4:00 with lunch provided.

Topics will include the 2024 Elections and GOTV, engaging college students, leadership and membership tips and tools, DEI around the state, mis- and dis-information in the 2024 election, and making your voice heard in advocacy. Whether you're a new member or a long-timer, this is a great way to meet members of other local Leagues and get some great ideas - and there will be plenty!

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday March 23 - 10:00 to 4:00 pm - held at The Blake (LWVNYS offices)
Watch for registration information shortly.

<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 New Members:
Liz Yanoff of Niskayuna
Monica Mackey of Niskayuna

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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.

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**MEMBERSHIP FOR JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2024**

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ No Fee Full-time 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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**ACTIVE MEMBERS:** The League depends upon the work of its members, even if for just a short task. Please check any areas that interest you. We appreciate your help.

**Register Voters** \_\_\_\_\_ **Candidate Forums** \_\_\_\_\_ **Get Out the Vote** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Citizenship Mentoring Group** \_\_\_\_\_ **Environment** \_\_\_\_\_ **Students Inside Albany** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Observer Corps** \_\_\_\_\_ **Judicial** \_\_\_\_\_ **Health** \_\_\_\_\_ **Membership** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Facebook** \_\_\_\_\_ **Website Work** \_\_\_\_\_ **Other Technical Skills (Describe)** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Other areas of interest** \_\_\_\_\_