



Letter from the President - February 2024

Dear LWVSC Friends,

February is an important month for the League of Women Voters. Local Leagues like ours, as well as State Leagues, will hold their Program Planning Meetings. We will review last year's program and discuss any additions and/or amendments we wish to make for 2024. The way we come to agreement on our proposed program is by **consensus**, meaning most members at the meeting feel that they approve of the changes that have been put forward after review and discussion. Our full membership will approve our program at our June annual meeting.

But what is a program anyway? Sometimes it's easier to think of a program as a set of **positions** that are important to our League. For example, working against voter suppression is a position, as is improving public education. Our positions allow us to take action on them - hold public education sessions, advocate on policies, lobby our legislators and elected officials, etc.

LWVUS has chosen the theme for this year's program planning as the **Campaign for Making Democracy Work**. Our local League will pay particular attention to "voting rights, improving elections, money in politics, redistricting, and abolishing the Electoral College". In addition, we will also look at how we apply **diversity, equity, and inclusion** in our program, making sure that we have included all our members in the decision-making process. Once we have discussed and chosen our positions, we must also be sure that they are in line with those of LWVUS. That is usually very easy to do as LWVUS positions are broad and cover an enormous number of topics and issues.

Please consider coming to LWVSC's Program Planning meeting Thursday, February 8 at 5:30 pm. You'll find your invitation in this Bulletin. You'll learn a lot about our League, have an evening of good food and conversation, and have a voice in what our League represents.

In League,

Ann Hatke
President
LWV Schenectady County

Voter Services

Important Dates

February 14: deadline to change party enrollment

April 2: Presidential Primary Election

Early voting from March 23- March 30

June 25: Primary Elections for US Congress, NYS Assembly and NYS Senate

Early voting from June 15- June 23

November 5: General Election for President, Congress, NYS Assembly, NYS Senate

Early voting from October 26- November 3

Update on Changes to Local Elections

Our latest guidance from the NYS League of Women Voters is that the recently enacted changes to local elections, moving town elections to even-numbered years, will take effect January 1, 2025. In practical terms, currently elected town officials will have their terms extended for one year. Of course, if you are an elected official, check with the Board of Elections to make sure this is the case. City and village elections will remain in odd-numbered years.

Voter Registration

We're off to a quick start in voter registration efforts for 2024. We'll be tabling at the Schenectady Greenmarket on February 4 and 25 and on March 24. Shifts are either 9:30-noon or noon-2 PM. Sign up at [LWV Voter Registration](#).

Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

The Voter Services Committee met on January 10th to brainstorm ideas to increase voter turnout in 2024. They came up with many great ideas. We'll be focusing on publicizing early voting sites, dates and times by putting up lots of flyers wherever people gather. We hope to recruit college students to help us put up flyers. We also plan to distribute early voting information and voter registration forms to community groups to hand out to their members. To assess how effective our GOTV efforts are, we plan to compare 2 similar election districts in the City of Schenectady, with or without a door-to-door campaign of distributing voting information.

*Cheryl Nechamen
Voter Services Chair*

Program Planning Potluck February 8th

Join us to review our programs (positions on issues) for the coming year at a potluck supper on February 8th at 5:30 PM. Bring your copy of the local program for 2024 (found in this Bulletin).

The potluck supper will be held at Cheryl Nechamen’s house in Schenectady. Please RSVP to Cheryl at lwvschenectady@gmail.com or 518-346-4820 (landline so don’t text!).



Bring your favorite dish to share!

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”



League of Women Voters
Environmental Committee of
Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady
presents

Inflation Reduction Act Clean Energy Benefits and Cost Savings for New Yorkers

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 represents the single largest investment in climate and energy in U.S. history, directing billions of dollars towards homeowners, renters, and businesses to lower the cost of clean energy technologies. Over the next decade, the IRA promises to grow New York's clean energy economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet the goals of the Climate Act.

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 7:00 - 8:00

Presentation and Q & A

Emily Dean works for New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) as Director of Federal Funding Strategy, a newly appointed position as of June 2023. Previously, Emily served as NYSERDA's Director of Housing Decarbonization.



Please register in advance for this virtual meeting ([here](#)).
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Zoom meeting.

**Welcome New Members:
Julia Durgée of Niskayuna**

More information on member:

Liz Yanoff is department chair of Education & Social Sciences at Hudson Valley Community College. She lives in Niskayuna with her husband Brian, a physicist for GE HealthCare, and has two adult children

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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.



**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.



**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** \_\_\_\_\_

## **League of Women Voters of Schenectady County Local Program 2023-2024**

### **Justice and the Law**

Support improvements to the local criminal justice system by:

- \* Monitoring and strengthening the Probation and Parole procedures, with an emphasis on rehabilitation and supportive services with programs such as the Ex-Offender Re-Entry Program in Schenectady County
- \* Facilitating the implementation of alternative courts (problem solving courts) in Schenectady County and promoting collaborations to support them
- \* Monitoring the juvenile justice system including Family Court and promoting community-based rehabilitation
- \* Supporting restorative justice programs such as the Center for Community Justice
- \* Improving accessibility to police complaint procedure
- \* Improving Mental Health Crisis Intervention
- \* Supporting the efforts of the Schenectady Police Reform and Re-invention Collaborative and other juvenile and adult reform initiatives.
- \* Support the monitoring of the Schenectady County Jail, including complaint resolution, public health measures, transparency, and greater oversight of day-to-day conditions

### **Local Government**

- \* Monitor activities of county governmental units, including town boards, the Schenectady City Council and the Schenectady County Legislature, monitor activities of other quasi- governmental units, public authorities and agencies such as Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority, Metroplex, IDAs and Planning Boards monitor activities of elected public Boards of Education
- \* Support standards of high professional qualifications and political nonpartisanship in manager form of government
- \* Evaluate opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation and examine options for the consolidation of governmental services in Schenectady County

### **Children at Risk**

- \* Collaborate with other organizations to identify the needs of children, including physical and mental health, in Schenectady County, facilitate programs on their behalf and educate the community about their needs and challenges; increase child and adolescent mental health services
- \* Study early childhood education and care-giving needs in Schenectady County from a policy and financing perspective
- \* Support greater coordination between child service agencies
- \* Encourage the availability and affordability of day care services for young children

## **Local Education**

- \* Monitor local initiatives related to schools and promote and advocate for adequate and equitable funding for all school districts so the students can reach their potential
- \* Ensure school districts are adequately prepared and staffed for virtual education
- \* Address disparities exposed by the need for virtual education \* Bolster public schools' ability to respond to needs of students
- \*Ensure that all school districts in Schenectady County are actively seeking to hire teachers of color
- \* Develop initiatives to bolster student attendance and retention

## **Environmental Issues**

Support the protection of environmental resources, land, water and air in Schenectady County:

- \*Advocate for the protection of water resources in the County
- \* Promote understanding of the global climate emergency and support efforts to mitigate its effects.
- \* Support energy conservation and development of renewable energy alternatives
- \* Support solid waste management programs that increase reuse and recycling in the County and City

## **Health Services**

- \* Educate and advocate for national/state/local health care reform that provides quality physical and mental health care for all citizens
- \* Encourage and support countywide comprehensive health care planning and access, equity, and safety in health care
- \*Educate about the Ellis and St. Peter's merger and its impact on end of life procedures
- \*Monitor the availability of services for the homeless including homeless veterans

*Proposed February 2023 - Approved June 2023*

# Summary of Public Policy Positions 2022-2024

League of Women Voters® of the United States

## REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.*

### *Voting Rights*

**Citizen's Right to Vote.** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote. **DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation.** Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

### *Election Process*

**Apportionment.** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

**Redistricting.** Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.

**Money in Politics. (formerly Campaign Finance)** Support campaign finance/MIP regulations that enhance political equality for all citizens, ensure transparency, protect representative democracy from distortion by undisclosed contributions and big money, and combat corruption and undue influence in government. Support campaign spending that is restricted but not banned. Support public financing, full disclosure, abolishing super PACs, and creating an effective enforcement agency.

**Selection of the President.** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates. **Voter Representation/Electoral Systems.** Support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters.



## *Citizen Rights*

**Citizen's Right to Know/Public Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate informed understanding and public participation in government decision-making.

**Individual Liberties.** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

## *Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals and Constitutional Conventions*

**Amendment Proposals.** Consider whether a proposal addresses matters of abiding importance, makes our political system more democratic, protects individual rights, could be achieved by a constitutional amendment or legislative proposal, and is consistent with other League positions.

**Constitutional Conventions.** Hold constitutional conventions only when certain conditions are in place, including limited to a specific topic, full transparency, delegates selected by population, and voting by delegates not by states.

## *Congress and the Presidency*

**Congress.** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decisionmaking capability, effective performance, and transparency. **The Presidency.** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

## *Privatization*

Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact, and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector.

## *Digital Equity*

High-speed affordable internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all US residents and businesses.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

***Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.***

### *United Nations*

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic, and humanitarian needs of all people.

### *Trade*

Support US trade policies that reduce trade barriers; expand international trade; and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental, and social goals.

### *Developing Countries*

Promote US policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

### *Arms Control*

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

### *Military Policy and Defense Spending*

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.**

### *Resource Management*

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Promote resource conservation, stewardship, and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government. Preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

### *Environmental Protection and Pollution Control*

The League supports the preservation of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment.

**Air Quality.** Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

**Energy.** Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation, and encourage the use of renewable resources.

**Land Use.** Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

**Water.** Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater, and drinking water, and set up a process to evaluate inter-basin water transfers.

**Waste Management.** Promote policies to reduce the generation of solid and hazardous wastes and promote their reuse and recycling.

**Nuclear.** Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

### *Transfer of Federal Public Lands*

Promote policies that keep federal public lands under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

### *Climate Change*

Support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

### *Public Participation*

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

### *Federal Agriculture Policies*

Support environmentally sound farm practices, and increased reliance on the free market while promoting adequate supplies of food at reasonable prices and regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. Enforce federal antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets, provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances. Support the federal government's funding of basic agricultural research to ensure adequate safety of our food supply.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

**Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.**

### *Criminal Justice*

Support a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices, pre-trial procedures, sentencing, incarceration, and re-entry.

### *Equality of Opportunity*

**Equal Rights.** Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA. Support equal rights for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

**Education, Employment, and Housing.** Support equal access to education, employment, and housing.

**Federal Role in Public Education.** Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children from pre-K through grade 12.

### *Fiscal Policy*

**Federal Deficit.** Promote responsible deficit policies.

**Funding of Entitlements.** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability, and health insurance.

**Tax Policy.** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

### *Health Care*

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides affordable access to a basic level of quality care for all US residents, including behavioral health that is integrated with and achieves parity with the physical health care system.

### *Immigration*

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business, and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for individuals already living in the country without legal permission to earn legal status.

### ***Meeting Basic Human Needs***

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Income Assistance.** Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing, and shelter.

**Support Services.** Provide essential support services.

**Housing.** Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

### ***Child Care***

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

### ***Early Intervention for Children at Risk***

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development, and safety of all children.

### ***Violence Prevention***

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

### ***Gun Policy***

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

### ***Urban Policy***

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

### ***Death Penalty***

Support abolition of the death penalty.

### ***Sentencing Policy***

Support the exploration and utilization of alternatives to imprisonment, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. Oppose mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

## *Human Trafficking*

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

## **Principles of the League of Women Voters**

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the US government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.