



President's Letter - May 2024

Dear LWVSC Friends,

I was recently browsing for information on the LWV New York State website and came across a wonderful section, "Civics Education in New York State". More than just a basic statement on why civics should be taught to NYS students, it's a complete curriculum for teachers. The sections include:

- Structure of NYS Government
- Individual Rights & Responsibilities in NYS
- Voting in NYS
- The Public Policy Process (Laws) In New York
- Influencing NYS Government
- Participating in Political Action in Your Local Community

You can view this site at: <https://lwvny.org/civics-lesson-plans/>

Each topic includes lesson plans, worksheets, how-to's, and resources that a teacher could use as a basic curriculum for the classroom or that anyone interested in learning more about New York State government could use as a learning tool.

Since I've been involved in our Citizenship Mentoring Group, both teaching citizenship classes and as a tutor, I've become much more aware of how little many US citizens actually know about civics. Part of the problem is that it's often not taught in the earlier grades, which would give students a good head start on learning some of the basic concepts in government. Civics education appears to begin only in high school when NYS Civics is taught to students about to graduate.

Immigrants applying for US citizenship are required to master 100 civics questions about the United States. The questions range from current leaders, parts of our government, duties of the president, important places, people and events. This is hard information for them to learn, often due to language issues, but they do seem to remember this information and pass at the rate of 91% according to government figures (2022). However, several studies also seem to be in agreement that only 4 in 10 Americans could pass the US citizenship civics exam today.

We've seen, especially in the last number of years, the problems that a lack of understanding of government can cause. Are Americans learning enough to judge issues critically, to vote in an informed way, and to participate in your democracy as engaged citizens? And more worrisome, do they care?

In League,

Ann Hatke
President
LWV Schenectady County

Proposed Leaders of LWV of Schenectady County 2024/2025

President	Cheryl Nechamen	2026
Vice President	Joan Fucillo	2026
Treasurer	Judy Middelkoop	2025
Secretary	Heide Westergard	2025
Inside Albany	Maxine Brisport	2025
Voter Services	Joan Fucillo	2026
Forums	Sandra McGarraugh	2025
Niskayuna	Heide Westergard/Liz Yanoff	2025
Scotia/Glenville	Connie Young/Ellen Daviero	2025
Rotterdam	Cindy Weissend /Sandra McGarraugh	2025
Schenectady	Peggy King/Julia Holcomb	2025
Vote 411	open	
Voter Registration	Connie Young/Mary Jane Shave Vicki Hoshko/Ellen Daviero	2025
Get Out the Vote	Pauline Kinsella/Ellen Daviero Sandra McGarraugh	2025
Bulletin	Nicole Salamone	2025
Advocacy/Lobbying	Open	
Nominating Committee	Sally Knutson Johanna Petersen/Mary Pritchard Connie Young Carmel Patrick	2025 2025 2025 2025
Membership	Connie Young/Johanna Petersen Vicki Hoshko/Carmel Patrick	2025 2025
Community Outreach		
Membership Events	Karen Bradley/Ellen Daviero	2025
Mail Chimp	Judy Middelkoop	2025
Facebook	Anita Sanchez	2025

Website	Judy Middelkoop/Barbara Vivier	2025
Observer Corps	LWV Membership	2025
At Large Board Members	Cathy Lewis/Kate Rose	2025
	Angela Dixon, Cynthia Engel, Judith Rightmyer	2025
Citizen's Police Review Board Representative	Bill Nechamen	2025
CPRB Alternate	Megan Haessig	2025
Committees		
Environment	Nancy Tudor	2026
Citizenship	Ann Hatke	2026

Voter Services Report

Have you taken our U.S. Constitution quiz? We have found this to be a fun way to engage with voters who stop at our table during voter registration drives (a big hats off to Sandra McGarraugh for coming up with this brilliant idea).

If you'd like to join in the fun volunteering for voter registration drives, check out our signup sheet at [LWV Voter Registration Signup](#). We're always adding new opportunities so take a look on a regular basis. If you have any questions, contact me at lwvschenectady@gmail.com.

What Do You Know About Your Constitution?

Immigrants who want to become citizens must answer civics questions as part of the naturalization test. The civics test is an oral test and the USCIS Officer will ask the applicant up to 10 of the 100 civics questions. An applicant must answer 6 out of 10 questions correctly to pass the civics portion of the naturalization test. Below is a sample of the civics questions that relate to the Constitution.

- 1. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?**
- 2. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?**
- 3. How many amendments does the Constitution have?**
- 4. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?**
- 5. How many U.S. Senators are there?**
- 6. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?**
- 7. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?**
- 8. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?**
- 9. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?**
- 10. What is the highest court in the United States?**
- 11. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?**
- 12. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?**

(See the answers on page 6)

Cheryl Nechamen, Voter Services Chair

The New York Equal Rights Amendment

On Nov. 5, 2024, we will go to the polls to elect a president, congressional representatives and local officials. Also on the ballot will be a proposed amendment to the New York State Constitution, to ensure equal protection under the law for all New Yorkers.

New York Constitution has a limited equal protection clause – it applies only to those experiencing discrimination based on “race, color, creed or religion.” The NY ERA would expand those protections to include, for example, sex, gender, age, disability, ethnicity – in other words, all New Yorkers.

The NYS League of Women Voters is working in partnership with the New Yorkers for Equal Rights Coalition to educate voters and to advocate for passage of the amendment. A simple explanation of the amendment’s purpose and what it entails is in this flyer from the coalition:

“Right now, New York’s State Constitution does not protect all New Yorkers – for example, pregnant New Yorkers, women, LGBTQIA+ people, those with disabilities, older adults, and people from different countries and cultures.

“We need a constitutional amendment so our rights and freedoms are protected – no matter who is in office.

“The NY ERA would:

- “Explicitly prohibit discrimination by the government based on a person’s ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex – including their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression – in addition to pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes.
- “Add to existing protections based on race and religion.
- “Ensure New York’s Constitution includes the strongest legal protections for all New Yorkers.”

But, do we need an amendment? Don’t New York’s laws protect people’s rights and freedoms? Yes. But, as we have learned in recent years, rights that we have relied on for decades can be diluted or even eliminated by a simple majority of a legislature or a court.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to amend New York’s Constitution. It is not affected by political whims the way laws, acts or regulations might be. This amendment is as close as we will ever get to a guarantee that “our rights and freedoms are protected – no matter who is in office.”

Joan Fucillo
NYS ERA Task Force Representative

<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:

Barbara Costanzo
Karen Smith
Vicki Herzl Watkins

Answers to U.S. Constitution Quiz

1. We the People
2. The Bill of Rights
3. Twenty-seven (27)
4. The Senate and House (of Representatives)
5. One hundred (100)
6. Six (6)
7. Four hundred thirty-five (435)
8. Two (2)
9. Based on the state’s population
10. The Supreme Court
11. Choices listed: ▪ to print money ▪ to declare war ▪ to create an army ▪ to make treaties
12. Choices listed: ▪ provide schooling and education ▪ provide protection (police) ▪ provide safety (fire departments) ▪ give a driver’s license ▪ approve zoning and land use

Want to learn more about the Citizenship Test?

The 100 Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test and suggested correct answers can be found at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/questions-and-answers/100q.pdf>.

LWV Schenectady <i>Proposed Budget 2024-2025</i>	2023-2024 Budget	As of 02/29/2024	Projected 2023-24 Year End	2024-2025 Proposed Budget
INCOME				
A. Dues	6,650.00	5,847.42	6,387.42	6,410.00
B. Contributions				
1. Membership	700.00	897.94	997.94	700.00
2. Non Member	0.00	250.00	250.00	0.00
3. Earmarked Funds				
a. Take Me To Vote	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
b. Fundraising	400.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
c. Citizenship Mentoring	250.00	0.00	500.00	250.00
d. Jail Outreach	-----	-----	-----	625.00
C. Other Contributions				
1. Interest	5.00	6.16	11.16	12.00
2. Election Monitoring	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
3. Election Reporting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4. Meeting Revenue	3,000.00	1,120.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
5. Cosponsorship/collaboration	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
D. From Reserves				
1. LWVNY Ed Foundation				
a. Youth Programs/Inside Albany	700.00	0.00	650.00	650.00
b. Other Grants	2,900.00	2,390.80	2,390.80	2,970.00
2. Our Reserves	4,707.50	0.00		528.00
E. Miscellaneous Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Income:	19,462.50	10,512.32	14,187.32	15,295.00
EXPENSES				
A. Operating Costs				
1. General Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2. P.O. Box Permit	200.00	200.00	200.00	225.00
3. Bank Charges	35.00	30.00	60.00	60.00
4. Copy Expense	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
5. Bulletin Expense	50.00	16.50	16.50	20.00
6. Web Page	450.00	425.00	425.00	425.00
7. Meeting Expense	3,000.00	1,057.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
<i>sub total:</i>	<i>3,785.00</i>	<i>1,728.50</i>	<i>3,701.50</i>	<i>3,780.00</i>

LWV Schenectady <i>Proposed Budget 2024-2025</i>	2023-2024 Budget	As of 02/29/2024	Projected 2023-24 Year End	2024-2025 Proposed Budget
B. Board & Admin Committees				
1. President	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
2. Board Tools & Expenses	200.00	200.00	200.00	200.00
3. Fundraising	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4. Membership Committee				
a. Copying/Supplies	34.00	25.68	25.68	34.00
b. Postage	16.00	35.75	35.75	16.00
<i>sub total:</i>	<i>350.00</i>	<i>297.18</i>	<i>261.43</i>	<i>300.00</i>
C. Delegates				
1. State Convention	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
2. National Convention	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00
<i>sub total:</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>
D. Financial Support of the League				
1. National PMP	3,568.00	1,784.00	3,568.00	3,456.00
2. State PMP	2,564.50	1,923.39	2,564.50	2,484.00
<i>sub total</i>	<i>6,132.50</i>	<i>3,707.39</i>	<i>6,132.50</i>	<i>5,940.00</i>
E. Educational Activities				
1. Environmental Committee	20.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
2. Observer/Action/Lobbying	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3. Judicial	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4. Youth Programs/Inside Albany	700.00	0.00	650.00	650.00
5. Voter Services				
a. Voter Resources	200.00	158.29	158.29	300.00
b. Take Me To Vote	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
c. Candidate Forums	2,100.00	2,010.80	2,010.80	500.00
d. GOTV	600.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
6. Other Studies/Consensus	25.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
7. Citizenship Mentoring	250.00	310.90	310.90	250.00
8. Jail Outreach	-----	-----	-----	625.00
9. Community Outreach	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
<i>sub total:</i>	<i>3,995.00</i>	<i>2,479.99</i>	<i>3,129.99</i>	<i>3,050.00</i>
F. Position Support				
1. Affiliation				
a. Schenectady Foundation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00

b. Human Rights Commission	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2. Co-sponsorship/collaboration	100.00	0.00	75.00	100.00
<i>sub total:</i>	<i>200.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>175.00</i>	<i>200.00</i>
G. Miscellaneous				
1. Other Expenses	25.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
<i>sub total:</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>25.00</i>
Total Expenses:	19,462.50	8,213.06	18,400.42	15,295.00

~~~~~  
 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, 2024 - June 30, 2025**

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 518-393-7061 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** \_\_\_\_\_