



**Letter from the President**

**September 2023**

Dear LWVSC Friends,

This summer, after years of sanding, repairing and repainting our front porch, my husband and I decided to face the reality that our porch wasn't getting any younger, as neither were we. We arranged for our porch to be completely renovated starting out with removing even the bare bones. We've gradually gotten to know the crew and that includes a very interesting young woman.

Women are now a common sight on building and road work sites, but we often see that they are often doing only "support" work – clean up, holding traffic signs, and unloading supplies. What makes our worker different is that she is the one who is doing one of the most important tasks on the job – the framing out. Framing is the process of connecting the building materials together to create a new structure. Mistakes done at this stage can lead to a world of headaches in the future. Luckily for us, she's doing an excellent job.

Seeing her work closely and equally with the rest of the crew during the same week as Women's Equality Day was to see women's equality in action. Yet, as the August 26 guest column on behalf of the four Capital Region Leagues in the *Schenectady Gazette* pointed out, we are currently losing ground in our fight to obtain committed and legal policies that insure the rights of all women.

In 2022 and 2023 our NYS Legislature passed a state constitutional amendment that "creates new protections in our constitution against discrimination based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, disability, age, sex – including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive health care and autonomy." (*LWV NYS website*)

In 2024, it will be our turn to vote on the NYS Equal Rights Amendment. We'll also need to see where political candidates stand on this issue, too. There's too much at stake to let this opportunity slip through our fingers.

In League,

Ann Hatke  
President

### Contacting your Representative...Does it Really Matter?

How many times a week do you get an action alert in your email—call your representative about this or that issue? Send a letter to your congressperson, phone the mayor’s office, contact the governor. And it seems like a lot of work, just another chore to do—for what result? Does it really do any good? Does my phone call, e-mail, or letter really make a difference?

The short answer: YES.

Here’s a headline from CNN: *“Wyoming senator rethinking gun legislation after constituents flood her office with calls urging action.”*

Cyndi Lummis, Senator from Wyoming, got so many calls from constituents that she couldn’t ignore them. Every single lawmaker needs voters in order to keep their jobs. Just a few dozen people weighing in on an issue can tip the scales. And the effect is even more powerful when you contact local legislators and agencies. I worked in state government for many years, and I saw again and again how even a single letter or phone call could stir up interest in an issue and really make a difference.

What works best? The more direct a communication, the more effective it is. In-person office visits or town halls are the most powerful. Phone calls are next. Then emails.

One call, one letter won’t always change the world. But your action can be the catalyst for many others. Use the power of social media, letters to the editor, and just talking to friends, kids, grandchildren, to spread the word about how you’ve raised your voice on an issue that’s dear to your heart. Others may say, “Hey, I could do that, too.”

<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>

**Online Voter Registration Now Available at the NYS Board of Elections Website**

You can use the Board of Elections' Online Voter Registration system to register to vote or to update your voter registration information. Updated information could include providing your County Board of Elections with your new name, new address, or changing your party enrollment. Completed applications are sent to the appropriate County Board of Elections for approval and processing.



To register you will need to use a [NY.Gov](#) ID. If you have previously used [NY.Gov](#) with another agency, you may use the same login to access the Online Voter Registration portal. If you have not used [NY.Gov](#) you will need to create an account.

To get to the online voter registration portal on the NYS BOE website, click here: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/OnlineVoterReg.html>

**Same Day Voting - October 28**

New York State Board of Elections has approved all those eligible to register to vote in New York State may use an affidavit ballot AND vote on Saturday, October 28. Referred to as "Golden Day" being October 28 is the final voter registration deadline AND also the first day of Early Voting.

**Important Dates to Remember**

General Election: November 7, 2023  
 Early Voting: October 28 – November 5, 2023

Date	Deadline Information
October 23	Last day for Board of Elections to receive absentee ballot application by letter, telefax, or through the absentee request portal.
October 23	Last day for change of address.
October 28	Last day for IN-PERSON Voter Registration; MAIL IN registrations must be received by a Board of Elections.
November 6	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
November 7	Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local Board of Elections no later than Nov. 14th. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 20th.
November 7	Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local Board of Elections or to any poll site in your county.

## **Volunteers Needed for Candidate Forums September and October 2023**

The League of Women Voters of Schenectady County will sponsor four candidate forums before the general election on November 7. These forums, or “meet the candidate” sessions are designed to stimulate voter interest and knowledge of the issues and to encourage voter participation in elections. All candidates for office who meet New York State election law requirements and are certified by the Schenectady County Board of Elections are invited to take part in a forum. We have an excellent track record of hosting informative and relevant discussions that engage candidates and voters in a nonpartisan manner.

The League has always depended on member volunteers to staff the forums and these volunteers are central to our success. The candidate forums are scheduled for the following dates:

Niskayuna: Thursday 9/21, 6:30 - 8:30  
Glenville: Wednesday 9/27, 7:00 - 9:00  
Rotterdam: Thursday 10/5, 6:00 - 7:30  
Schenectady: Wednesday 10/11, 6:00 - 7:45

We are seeking volunteers for these positions:

**Time Keepers:** The Time Keeper will use a stopwatch and warning cards to maintain control of the time during the forum. They will be required to politely but firmly stop a candidate who is attempting to speak beyond the allotted time.

**Ushers:** The Ushers will ensure that the room is ready by checking the placement of tables and chairs, placing nameplates and water bottles for candidates, and ensuring all necessary items are in place. Additionally, the Ushers will distribute programs and index cards for questions from the audience, as well as welcoming the candidates and community members.

**Question Reviewers:** The Question Reviewers will review the index cards submitted by audience members to avoid duplication of questions and remove inappropriate questions or comments.

**You can sign up to volunteer at:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/candidateforums>

**Maxine Brisport and Sandra McGarraugh**

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”

Time to renew

If you haven’t already done so, don’t forget to renew your League membership – we need YOU. If you don’t have a chance to renew at the June dinner, please mail your check and renewal form to:

LWV Schenectady County
PO Box 9135
Schenectady, NY 12309

Thank You!

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 \_\_\_\_\_