



The Leaguer

Volume 27, Issue 3
January, 2023

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
lww@lwwchautauqua.org, 679-1774

Chautauqua County Public

January 25th at Noon, Zoom Meeting

Dr. Lillian Ney, President of the Chautauqua County Board of Health



To register for this event, contact Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEKdeGvpjgpGdKiMGHXpfe5EGQ_nGifyo4J

Note: "Charity Work in the Ukraine" will be a Brown Bag Luncheon on February 1st at Noon.
See page 4 for details.

From the President

There were many timely topics in the papers today. Topics that we as members of the League of Women Voters need to be attentive to. The first is the politically sensitive issue of bail reform that Governor Hochul addressed in her annual address to state lawmakers. A new bail law was passed in 2019. Our League will be exploring this topic in a “hot topic” presentation in collaboration with the American Democracy Project at the State University of New York at Fredonia. This is a great opportunity for students to get informed, learn about what the League does and possibly get involved. We will look at how the bail reform has impacted crime rates, the impact on people accused of nonviolent offences and what bearing this has had on our jail system. We hope to announce the date for this presentation, which will be at the University in the next Leaguer.

We are happy to have Dr. Lillian Ney speak to us about the new Chautauqua Health Collaboration. (Please refer to information in this Leaguer.) The Collaborative aims to help inform, promote, and connect community efforts addressing a range of local physical, mental health and wellness priorities. Governor Hochul emphasized the need for mental health care in her address, stating that there has been an underinvestment in mental health care. The underinvestment has impacted many areas of our community, including public safety.

Finally, there are several election bills being advanced. The Senate passed legislation allowing portable polling locations. (S.242.) Another bill (S.263) “Electoral Crime of Voter Suppression” has been passed by the Senate. (S.610) allows for Absentee Ballot drop-off box locations. These are just a few of the elections bills you can look at if you go to. The bills are in the Assembly. <https://nyassembly.gov/leg/>

Tell our representatives what you think.

I think it is still worthwhile to pursue getting a poll site at the State University of New York at Fredonia. This means registering students there. Is this something you would be interested in doing?

Warm regards and take care,
Mary Croxton
President, League of Women Voters Chautauqua

For more information about the League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County, and to become a member, visit <http://www.lwvchautauqua.org>; follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoterschautauqua/>; subscribe to our YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWIU7RI14CWbtKOMfLISU-w/videos>



How Our League Works



Now that you are a member.... do you think you might want to serve on our board of directors?

Have lunch with us on February 7th at Noon!

Please text 716-673-5197

You can serve on the board of directors without a portfolio! ...so you can learn about the many things we do,

Being a board member has the benefits of:

- meeting many new people, including other nonprofit board members, community partners, and leaders
- getting a seat behind the wheel of a major trusted organization, and you play a key role in strategizing.
- Having your voice likely to be heard – and it has impact. You'll hear the impactful voices of others, too.
- caring more than you thought you could

The first reason to serve on a Board of Directors on a more conventional list might be, "To contribute to something meaningful." I wonder if the first reason might be stated differently: *To allow something meaningful to contribute to you.*

It works both ways. At least, in my experience it does.



Dr. Lillian Ney, President of the Chautauqua County Board of Health will discuss Public Health issues of concern in our county, including the reorganization of County Health and Human Services and Department of Mental Hygiene. Covid-19 continues to plague our county along with flu and the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Going forward who will fill the vacancies left by former director Christine Schuyler, and epidemiologist Bree Agett. Dr. Michael Faulk has become the interim director.

This event is a great opportunity for members of the Chautauqua County community to learn about ways they can support Public Health.

To register for this event, contact Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZEKdeGvpjgpGdKiMGHXpfe5EGQ_nGifyo4J

Charity Work in the Ukraine

First Presbyterian Church in Fredonia at Noon on February 1st for a brown bag lunch.

Those who want to set up the tables should come 45-60 mins early. If you wish, please bring food donations for the food pantry and pay \$2. Those who don't want to bring food please pay \$5.

Sally Naetzker was born and raised in Ashville New York. In her early 20s, she left the area to pursue academics in the NYC metro area where she stayed and worked for almost 20 years.



She married Tom Baer in 2001 and spent most of the next 16 years between the USA and Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Nepal doing community development, teaching English, basic health care and other grassroots activities. In 2016 they moved to SC to prepare for further service overseas.

Hoping to return and to live in Kazakhstan, the pandemic had other ideas and Tom and Sally along with their three youngest children returned to their home area of Chautauqua County in October 2020.

When the war began this last February, Tom and Sally were uniquely prepared to go to Poland and Ukraine to help in any way possible to support Ukraine. On February 1st, she will share her journey serving during this dark time for

Ukraine.

Donations can be made to their non-profit Baer Essentials 1039 Hunt Rd Lakewood NY 14750 or by stopping by their 6 Baers Toy and Gift Shoppe 50 Chautauqua Ave Lakewood New York 14750. Please friend Sally Naetzker Baer for more updates on her work in Ukraine.



As currently written, our state constitution is an inadequate tool to advance equality and protect against discrimination. As we reckon with the realities of how our systems – judicial, criminal, economic, educational – perpetuate our long history of racism, misogyny, and discrimination, we must pursue an amendment to our constitution that will contain both broad protections and the tools needed to pursue true equality through our court system.

Our state constitution fails to advance equality in two important ways. First, our state constitution is ineffective: it is incredibly hard to bring forward a successful claim of discrimination under our NYS Constitution. To do so, you must prove the discrimination was intentional – that a law or policy was enacted intending to discriminate. This is a high standard and almost impossible to meet because discrimination often happens not through intent, but through impact. A law or policy impacts individuals in a way that is discriminatory, even if it wasn't intended to.

Second, our state constitution is incomplete: Our NYS Constitution fails to prohibit discrimination against groups that have been historically targeted, including people with disabilities, LGBT individuals, immigrants, women, and pregnant people.

Advancing S.8797 (Krueger) will begin the process needed to add a new section to our state constitution that would provide robust protections against discrimination that work effectively to hold our state and its institutions accountable for dismantling systemic discrimination. Adding an Equality Amendment to our state constitution would:

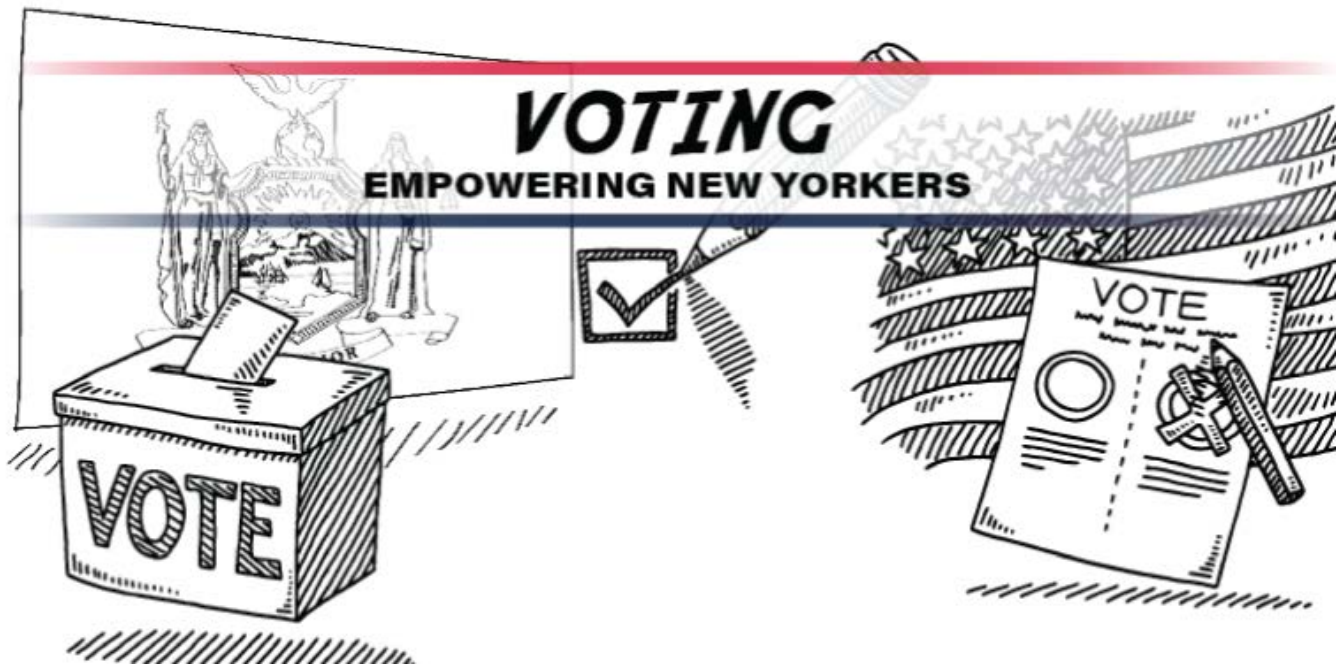
1. broadly prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or sex including pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
2. provide tools to dismantle structural discrimination by prohibiting not only acts of intentional discrimination but also policies and practices that have a discriminatory impact.
3. explicitly include language to clarify that discrimination based on a person's pregnancy or pregnancy outcome is sex discrimination – which is crucial given the national trend of criminalizing people for various pregnancy outcomes, as well as the likely outcome of pending Supreme Court cases that are poised to upend abortion and contraception rights, and the rights of pregnant people.

To advance true equality we must explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes. The term "pregnancy outcomes" refers to the result of pregnancy, including live birth (full term or preterm birth), still birth, miscarriage, birth to babies who do not survive past the neonatal period, and induced abortion. Across the country, and here in New York, women have been criminalized and had their rights denied on the basis of pregnancy, threatening women's equality under the law. Neither

the U.S. Constitution nor New York State's Constitution provides explicit protections against discrimination based on pregnancy – even though capacity for pregnancy has historically been at the heart of sex-based discrimination.

For many New Yorkers, our lives lie at the intersection of multiple identities that have historically faced discrimination – race, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, national origin to name a few. It is critical that we ensure our constitution truly reflects and protects all New Yorkers. We call on the Assembly and Senate to advance an inclusive Equality Amendment this legislative session. If we do not pass S.8797 this year, the earliest the amendment could be on the ballot is 2026. We can't afford to wait four more years to advance equality for New Yorkers, especially with a U.S Supreme Court poised to roll back some of our most fundamental rights. We must fight to ensure the NYS Constitution reflects and protects all of us – and for that to occur it needs to be amended.

Pro-Voting Reforms



On Monday, Jan. 9, New York Democrats announced that they were moving several pro-voting reforms through the state Senate.

[Senate Bill 242](#) would allow local boards of election to open more portable early voting sites during early voting.

[Senate Bill 610](#) would allow boards to operate more absentee ballot drop-off locations.

[Senate Bill 263](#) would make voter suppression and deceptive practices punishable offenses.

[Senate Bill 350](#) would require plaintiffs who challenge the constitutionality of New York election laws to file lawsuits in certain judicial departments. The bill aims to curtail “forum shopping,” a practice where litigants file lawsuits in jurisdictions with favorable judges.

[Senate Bill 657](#) would create a statewide voting and elections database to aid the public and election administrators.

[Senate Bill 616](#) would effectively rescind an out-of-date ban on providing food and water for voters waiting at the polls, otherwise known as a line-warming ban. Individuals would be permitted to hand out any item with “a nominal value, including but not limited to, snacks, water, soft drinks, or other refreshments.”

In total, there have been upwards of two dozen election bills already filed in the New York Legislature. In addition to the Democratic priorities listed above, other introduced bills would implement universal mail-in voting, which would automatically send voters a mail-in ballot every election; require bilingual poll workers in areas with high percentages of non-English speaking voters; end felony disenfranchisement; add protections against unnecessary voter purges; adopt ranked-choice voting for primaries; raise poll worker pay; create same-day registration and more.

Two bills introduced by Republican lawmakers would create a strict photo ID law and documentary proof of citizenship requirement for voter registration.



January 25 at Noon, County Public Health, Zoom Meeting

February 1 at Noon, Charity Work in the Ukraine, Brown Bag Luncheon meeting at First Presbyterian church in Fredonia

March (Date TBA), Bail Reform Discussion

April (Date TBA), Cybercrime

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Mission: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy: We are fully committed to ensure compliance - in principle and practice - with LWVUS' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy: The League 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, communities, and policy makers 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, socio-economic 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.



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

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*The League of Women Voters of
Chautauqua County is where
hands-on work to safeguard
democracy leads to civic
improvement.*

**League of Women Voters
of Chautauqua County**

Mary Croxton, President
Nancy Boynton
Susan Evans
Pat Kirell
Marcia Merrins
Lisa Mertz

Invite a Friend to Join or Give the
Gift of League Membership!!

Make Your Voice Heard!

Membership Form

Mail to:

LWV Chautauqua County
P.O. Box 42
Fredonia, New York 14063

Membership dues: Individual: \$70.00, Household: \$105.00, Student: Free

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