

# LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SCHENECTADY COUNTY

## BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 2020

### HEALTH COMMITTEE

The Health Committee will meet on February 26th at 1 pm to continue planning for a program on negotiating your way through a serious illness.

Location will be announced by email. If you wish to attend and do not receive committee email contact Carol Furman at [lwvschenectady@gmail.com](mailto:lwvschenectady@gmail.com).

### IMPORTANT NEWS FOR VOTERS

The Governor recently signed a bill that allows voters to change their party enrollment up until February 14<sup>th</sup>. Simply fill out a new voter registration form to change your party enrollment. Previously, the law required that an intervening general election had to occur before a change in party affiliation took effect, so this change is greatly appreciated. The presidential primaries in New York will take place on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Primaries for U.S. Senator and Representative and for all state offices will take place on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Cheryl Nechamen, Voter Services Chair*

### Join us for Our Annual Program Planning Potluck



To be held on  
Wednesday,  
February 12th

5:30 pm Orientation for new and prospective members  
6 pm Potluck Dinner  
7:00 pm Discuss and plan exciting projects for the coming year

Bring a salad to share!

There will be a short board meeting at 5:00 pm

Location: Johanna Petersen's home  
2029 Lexington Parkway  
Schenectady, NY  
Please RSVP to Johanna at  
[lwvschenectady@gmail.com](mailto:lwvschenectady@gmail.com).

**Please bring your copy of the Local Program and LWVUS Positions with you** (found in this edition of the Bulletin)

Like us. Look us up on:

[www.facebook.com/lwvschenectady](https://www.facebook.com/lwvschenectady)

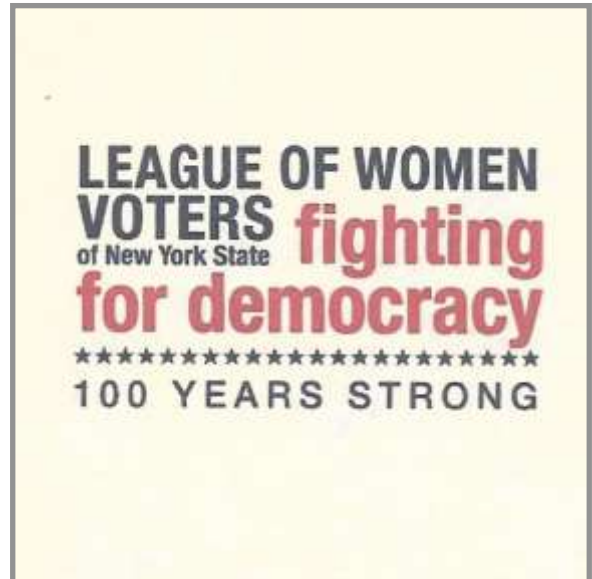
## President's Letter

Congratulations, Everyone...We're 100!

This milestone 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters will take place on February 14, 2020. L WVSC will be one of at least 600 other Leagues nationwide who will be participating in the day of action called "Women Power the Vote."

In honor of the LWV founders who fought for a woman's right to vote:

- We have asked Congressman Paul Tonko, Mayor Gary McCarthy, Anthony Jasenski, Chair of the Schenectady County Legislature, and John Mootooveren, President of the City Council to proclaim February 14, 2020, the "League of Women Voters Day."
- I have written a letter to the editor of *The Daily Gazette* in commemoration of this event, and to highlight what our own League has been doing so well for over 95 years.
- Our League will donate a copy of *Lillian's Right to Vote* to all eleven elementary school libraries in the Schenectady City School District. The beautifully illustrated book tells the story of a 100-year-old African-American woman who remembers her family's struggle to vote as she herself is going to place her own vote.
- With School District approval, LWV members will visit all eleven elementary schools to read to the children.
- The Citizenship Mentoring Group class will have a special unit on voting and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.



In our 100<sup>th</sup> year, let's encourage every voter to play a role in shaping our country!

Ann Hatke

## HISTORIC FIND

Recently the Schenectady County Economic Development and Planning Office contacted us through our website. They had discovered a booklet in their files called, "You Are Entering Schenectady County", published by the League of Women Voters in 1961. They wondered if we would like to have it. Yes, please!

This 82-page "booklet" is full of an incredible amount of information: organizational charts of city, town and county government, how taxes are assessed and collected, county responsibility in public health, how the school district functions, information on public housing, and much, much more. There is a hand-typed insert listing public officials similar to our own *Who's Who* publication, and even a 14x22 inch map of Schenectady County glued in the back cover. It's a truly amazing labor of love and we'll try to make sure all members have a chance to see it.

## **Proposed Local Program 2019-2020**

### **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 Community Accountability Board.
- \* improve accessibility to police complaint procedure
- \* improve mental health crisis intervention

### **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 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 in Schenectady County, facilitate programs on their behalf and educate the community about their needs and challenges.
- \* Study early childhood education and caregiving needs in Schenectady County from a policy and financing perspective.

### **Local Education**

- \* Monitor local initiatives related to schools and promote and advocate adequate and equitable funding for all school districts so the students can reach their potential.

### **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 global climate change 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.

## LWVUS POSITIONS 2018 -2020

### 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 influences in government. Support campaign spending that is restricted and not banned. Support public financing, full disclosure, abolishing superPACs, 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

#### **Citizen Rights**

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

#### **Evaluation 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. Individual Liberties - Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Constitutional Conventions** - Hold Constitutional Conventions only when certain conditions are in place, such as: limited to a specific topic, full transparency, delegates selected by population, and voting by delegates not by states

**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.

### **Congress and the Presidency**

**Congress** - Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and 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.

## 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 U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

**Developing Countries** Promote U.S. 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 & Protection** 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.

**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 that reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

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

**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.

**Agriculture Policy** Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

**Federal Agriculture Policies** - Provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances, enforce federal antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets and apply clean air and water regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. The federal government should fund basic agricultural research to provide 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.**

### 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 pre-K through grade 12.

### **FISCAL POLICY**

**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.

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

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

### **Health Care**

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides affordable access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. 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 unauthorized immigrants already in the country 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 Control** 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** LWVUS supports abolition of the death penalty.

**Sentencing Policy** Support the exploration and utilization of alternatives to imprisonment, should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes 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**

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

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”**

President	Cheryl Nechamen
Vice-President	Ann Hatke
Secretary	Heide Westergaard
Bulletin Editor	Helen MacDonald

## MEMBERSHIP

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. Dues money makes working on our goals possible. **DUES for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020** (half-year dues reduction is available. Contact Connie Young at lwvschenectady@gmail.com)

**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 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 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 any questions. Dues and contributions are not tax deductible.)

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\_\_\_\_\_ *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 for a short task.

Please check any activities that interest you. We appreciate your help.

Judicial \_\_\_\_\_ Health \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_ Environment \_\_\_\_\_ Observer

Corps \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Voter Services: Register Voters \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate Forums \_\_\_\_\_ Voter

Information \_\_\_\_\_ Computer Skills Graphics/Layout \_\_\_\_\_ Databases \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship

Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_ Website Work \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook \_\_\_\_\_ Electronic Publicity \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Technical Skill? (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_ Other areas of

interest \_\_\_\_\_