



President's Letter

Letter from the President June 2021

Dear LWVSC Friends,

Lately we've seen lots of yard signs for school board elections and local primaries. It's an exciting time for our community as more and more health safety restrictions are removed and we are better to able to focus on candidates, platforms, and elections. The national League of Women Voters has just published the *2020 Election Impact Report*, and I urge all of you to read it. The report evaluates how Leagues across the country impacted the 2020 election – an election that saw the greatest participation in US history. You can read the report by going to the League of Women Voters website (www.lwv.org), and then typing in *2020 Election Impact Report* in the Search box.

Thank you to all our members who attended the June Annual Meeting June 8 on Zoom or mailed in their ballots to be counted. For me, it's thrilling to think of all the local Leagues having the same kind of meeting in June, making decisions together and planning for the future. Once again, I invite you to attend a board meeting to learn more about what your League is doing. We are now holding hybrid meetings so it's possible to attend in person or participate via Zoom. Please let me know if you are interested.

Summer is official now, and what better way to celebrate than to have a party! **SAVE THE DATE for Thursday, June 24 at 5:30 pm**, for a potluck supper at Cheryl Nechamen's (our past President and Voter Services Chairperson). The board will meet at 4:30 pm also at Cheryl's house. Look for details to follow soon...

Looking forward to summer,
In League,

Ann Hatke

Citizenship Mentoring Group

It's hard to keep a great group down, and we are slowly but surely laying our plans for a return to classes and tutoring. We will be holding a tutor training class on Thursday, June 17 at 3:00 pm via Zoom. If you have an interest in helping immigrants prepare for US Citizenship and would like to attend the training, please contact Ann Hatke at: ash.lwvsc@gmail.com.

VOTER INFORMATION

Voters can vote in-person before Primary Day at designated voting sites in Schenectady County. All registered voters can vote early, but please know that if you vote during the early voting period, you are not eligible to vote on Election Day.

Early Voting runs from June 12th through June 20, 2021

Locations:

Hon. Karen B. Johnson Library
Central Branch, 99 Clinton Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

South Schenectady Fire Department
6 Old Mariaville Road
Rotterdam, NY 12306

Dates & Times:

Primary Election

Date and Time

Saturday, June 12, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 2:00

Sunday, June 13, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m

Monday, June 14, 2021
Noon – 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 15, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m

Wednesday, June 16, 2021
Noon – 8:00 p.m

Date and Time

Thursday, June 17, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, June 18, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 19, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 20, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m

Legislative Update

Jennifer Wilson, Jennifer@lwvny.org

Governor Signs Legislation to Restore Voting Rights for all People on Parole

In May we were thrilled that the Governor finally signed into law legislation to allow any person on parole to have their right to vote restored automatically upon release. The law states that all individuals will be notified both verbally and in writing that their voting rights will be restored, and that the person will be provided a voter registration form and assistance in filling it out, along with voter education materials by the Board of Elections. Either the person registering or the Department of Corrections will transmit the completed registration application to the local board of the individual's residence.

The League will be updating all of our voter education materials regarding this issue in the coming weeks.

Legislature Passes Voter Registration and No Excuse Absentee Constitutional Amendments

In May, the Assembly passed two constitutional amendments to allow for no-excuse absentee voting and to remove the constitutionally mandated 10-day voter registration deadline. These amendments have already been passed by the Senate and will now appear as a ballot referendum in November. The League has long supported these amendments and will be urging voters to vote “Yes” on these ballot measures.

Safe Staffing Legislation Passed in Legislature

After many years of advocacy, the Legislature passed two safe staffing bills for nursing homes and hospitals to ensure both patients and healthcare workers are protected requiring them to meet minimum staffing levels of nurses and other health care staff.

Under the new laws, the state health commissioner will establish minimum staffing levels for nursing homes and will impose civil penalties if the homes fail to meet the minimum standards. Each resident would receive an average of 3.5 hours of care a day, with at least one hour from registered or licensed practical nurses and two hours from certified nursing assistants.

The new legislation also sets up clinical staffing committees in hospitals to determine staffing guidelines and decide the proper ratio between patients and staff. The panels would include hospital administrators as well as registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and other staff members who provide direct patient care.

The League has been supportive of this legislation since 2016 and we are pleased it has finally passed.

Senate Passes Bill to Ensure Voters' Ballots are Not Discounted

This week the Senate took up **legislation** requiring boards of elections to count affidavit ballots of eligible voters if a voter appears at a polling place that is in the voter's correct county but incorrect election district.

Currently voters who show up to the wrong poll site are told to vote by affidavit ballot. Although these voters may not be eligible to vote in all races on the ballot, they are frequently qualified to vote in certain races that may appear. Rather than counting races where the voter was eligible to vote, the current law disqualifies the voter's entire ballot. Under the current law, 13,800 New York ballots in the 2020 General Election were disqualified because the voter appeared at the wrong poll site.

VoteEarlyNY has released a comprehensive report detailing the areas of the state where ballot disqualifications for this issue are most prevalent. You can find a copy of VoteEarlyNY's report **here**.

The League is supportive of this proposal and has additional information about all of the election issues we are continuing to work on in our Legislative Packet.

League Sends Joint Letter on Redistricting Commission Funding Release

The League reported in last week's Legislative Update email that the state's Independent Redistricting Commission still has not received its budget appropriation for 2021-2022. Although the funds were approved in April, the Comptroller's office has not released them. The League partnered with 24 organizations and sent a letter to the State Comptroller urging him to immediately release the \$4 million in funding so the Commission can begin its work. We will continue to keep members updated on this issue.

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	Ann Hatke
Vice-President	Jude Rabig
Secretary	Heide Westergaard
Bulletin Editor	Helen MacDonald

New Member

Nicole Salamone

Nicole has been employed in Public Service roles for 18 years. She started as a clerk in the Village of Scotia and then went on to be the first State Certified Town Official with the town of Niskayuna. Nicole has been the Schenectady County Commissioner of Jurors for the past four years.

Nicole has joined the LWV to enable her to become more involved in the community at the volunteer level

2021 Students Inside Albany Virtual Conference

On May 21st and 22nd the League hosted our first ever virtual Students Inside Albany Conference.

Although last year we invited students who had been selected before the pandemic to join us for an afternoon of learning about state government, this was the first time the League has ever arranged a full conference including speakers and virtual meetings with the students' legislators.

In total 43 students joined us from around the state. On Friday the students learned about different types of advocacy and how to get involved as a civic minded young person. They had a NYS Politics 101 training and ended the evening with fun trivia about New York State.

On Saturday the students enjoyed a media panel featuring young up-and-coming Capitol reporters who spoke about their time in Albany and all the strange things about being a reporter covering New York State politics. After the media panel the students met virtually with their Assembly Members and Senators. The students were divided into Zoom break out rooms of 4-8 students so they could get a more personal experience when meeting with their legislators. In total 10 Senators and 8 Assembly Members met with students from around the state. Most students said this was their favorite part of the program.

We ended our virtual conference by encouraging the students to register to vote and showing them how they could register and where to find more information about voting. Although the conference had to be held remotely it was still a success and thus far the students have given us excellent feedback of the program.

Time to renew!

If you haven't already done so, don't forget to renew your League membership - we need YOU. You can mail your check and renewal form to:

LWV Schenectady County
PO Box 9135
Schenectady, NY 12309

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, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2022

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 HS 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.

Judicial _____ Health _____ Observer Corps _____ Fund Raising _____

Citizenship Mentoring Group _____ Environment _____ Education _____

Voter Services: Register Voters _____ Candidate Forums _____ Voter Information _____

Computer Skills: Graphics/Layout _____ Data Bases _____ Website Work _____

Facebook _____ Electronic Publicity _____ Other Technical Skill(Describe) _____

Other areas of interest _____