

Letter from the President – June 2022

Dear LWVSC Friends,

Looking back over several June Bulletins, I'm reminded of the presence of the Covid virus in our community. In the June 2020 issue, I wrote about the term "social distancing" and how we as a League could continue to communicate in different but still satisfying ways. In June 2021, my letter mentioned how we were now better able to focus on our school board and local elections as health safety restrictions were slowly being removed. This June finds us in an even better position, as we've now been thoroughly vaccinated and "boosted". May we all continue to stay healthy and safe as we go forward!

As you remember, our annual June meeting for the last two years was held not at the Turf Tavern as usual, but on Zoom. This year we're looking forward to meeting in person at our annual meeting, and this is cause for a real celebration. As a first, we will have music for the beginning hour of our dinner provided by Trio Capriccio, a group that is already well known to many of you. We decided to dispense with a speaker for this meeting, in favor of using the time to simply catch up with each other. I hope you are looking forward to this special evening as much as we are.

In League,
Ann Hatke



Helen MacDonald has been the editor of the LWVSC Bulletin for many years. She corrected our spelling, crossed our t's, and gently nudged us when the submission deadline had passed and we had not yet sent in our reports. In addition, she provided interesting and pertinent articles for us, and made sure all the necessary reminders and upcoming dates were stated. Helen will be retiring as Editor, but hopefully will continue to keep an eye out for just the right article or turn of phrase. Please join me in thanking Helen for all she has done over the years to keep us "in the know".



Excerpt from LWVUS Recommendations to Congress on Gun Safety

Closing Gun Show Loopholes

Only federally licensed firearms dealers are required to conduct background checks. However, 40 percent of gun sales are completed without a background check, including private online sales, gun show sales, person-to-person sales, and other private transactions. Approximately ninety-seven percent of voters want Congress to expand background checks to all gun sales, including gun owners and vendors. Background check expansions must be enacted immediately to reduce gun violence in our communities.

Providing Universal Background Checks

All firearm transfers should require background checks. In the 25 years since the Brady Law, more than three million illegal firearm transfers have been prevented. In 2015 alone, an average of 619 individuals per day were deemed by law to be too dangerous to possess a gun and were blocked by this system. Background checks are conclusively effective and have saved countless lives. For these reasons, we encourage the Senate to pass S.529, the Background Check Expansion Act, and take other bold steps to limit the crisis of gun violence in our country.

Banning Assault Weapons and Limiting Magazine Size

Congress must pass legislation to ban all military-style semi-automatic assault weapons like the one used to murder ten innocent people in Boulder, Colorado in 2021. Two-thirds of registered voters nationwide support a ban on the sale of assault weapons. These devices allow shooters to fire numerous rounds in rapid succession without having to stop and reload. Assault weaponry has been a central part of the mass killings in schools and public meeting places in the last ten years. Furthermore, placing limits on magazine size is a common-sense solution to shootings that risk multiple lives. This limit should include magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than ten ammunition rounds.

Increasing Penalties for Straw Purchases of Guns

Buying a gun for someone prohibited by law from possessing one or for someone who does not want their name associated with the transaction is an illegal firearm “straw” purchase. Because straw purchases of guns are a federal crime, Congress should pass legislation to increase the penalties for straw purchases when individuals who do not have criminal records buy guns and pass them on to individuals who are not eligible to purchase a firearm, including people convicted of a felony and domestic abusers.

Funding Research and Reporting of Gun Violence

In 2018-2019, the nation experienced more than four hundred mass shootings according to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research group that tracks shootings and their characteristics in the United States. These mass shootings included high-profile shootings in El Paso, Texas; Parkland, Florida; and Dayton, Ohio. The League showed up in all these instances to protect their communities. In 2020, the House approved \$25 million in federal research funding to study gun violence. The bill passed just days after the [seventh anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting that killed 26 people, including 20 children](#). That bill went unheard in the Senate at the time, but now is a critical opportunity for the Senate to show leadership by passing similar legislation and seeing it through to the President’s desk.

Virginia Case Solomon, CEO

League of Women Voters of the United States

For the complete version:

<https://www.lwv.org/lwvus-submits-recommendations-gun-safety-reforms-congressional-judiciary-committees>

President	Ann Hatke	
Vice President	Open	
Secretary	Heide Westergard	
Bulletin Editor	Open	

Citizenship Mentoring Group

Our summer session will begin on Saturday, July 2 at the Phyllis Bornt Library and Literacy Center, and will continue through Saturday, August 20. The Phyllis Bornt Library is located at 948 State Street. Classes will be held from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm on Saturdays. All materials are supplied at no cost to the student. If you know anyone who is interested in applying for US citizenship or has already applied, please have them contact:

Ann Hatke at lwvcitizen@gmail.com

Volunteer Opportunities!

LWVSC will be participating in the Schenectady Community Ministries (SICM) Summer Lunch program. Volunteers will serve nutritious lunches to children in our communities for a one-week time slot. We are waiting for our finalized date and location. Would you like to help? Contact Connie Young at:

cyoung50@nycap.rr.com

Overview of Recent Initiatives in New York State

provided by Sally Robinson, Issues & Advocacy, LWV Albany County and Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Deputy Director

10-day Voter Registration (S2951/A8858): This bill was passed in the Senate in 2021 and now an amended version is moving through both the Senate and Assembly. It was amended on the third reading in the Senate on May 23rd and was ordered to a third reading in the Assembly on May 24th. This bill clearly has the support it needs in the Senate and based on conversations with representatives it sounds like it has more than enough support in the Assembly. We just need to make sure this bill gets back onto the floor for a vote so that it passes this session.

Wrong Church (S284/A642B): This bill was passed in the Assembly and the Senate! It now just needs to reach the Governor's desk to be signed. It is worth it to note that there were some small changes to this bill that voting advocates weren't thrilled about, but the changes were deemed necessary in order for the bill to pass.

NYVRA (S1046D/A6678D): There is a lot of support behind this bill and it's one that most voting advocacy organizations are pushing for in the last few days of session. In the Senate it was amended and recommitted to Rules and was amended and recommitted to Election Law in the Assembly on May 19th. Most believe this bill has the power to pass in session this year.

Bigger Better Bottle Bill (A10184/S09164): This bill was referred to Environmental Conservation in the Assembly on May 5th and in the Senate on May 11th. The bill was introduced by Englebright in early May and Senator May signed on to carry the bill for the Senate on May 10th. Unfortunately, we haven't seen much progress to move this bill forward since.

NY Packaging Reduction Act (EPR) (A10185): This bill was introduced by Englebright at the same time he introduced the revised BBBB. It was referred to Environmental Conservation on May 5th. Unfortunately, this bill has not yet received a Senate sponsor. Senator Kaminsky did not want to carry Englebright's bill in the Senate and instead introduced his own piece of EPR legislation. The League, along with other environmental advocates, continues to back Englebright's bill and will continue to put pressure on lawmakers to find a sponsor in the Senate and move both of these bills ahead.

Court Simplification (A09401 and S8424): The biggest hurdle to these bills this session was the lack of continuity between the bills. The Assembly bill was referred to the Judiciary committee on March 1st. It went to the Attorney General for opinion on the 7th and was referred back to the Judiciary on April 4th. The Senate bill was referred to the Judiciary committee on February 28th. We don't expect either bill to move before session ends this year. The response to both bills highlighted the need for more visibility and education around this issue.

Fair and Timely Parole (S7514/A4231A): The Senate version of this bill was referred to Crime Victims, Crime and Correction and in the Assembly it was referred to Codes on January 5th. We have heard that there is enough support behind both parole bills for them to pass so we are pushing to see them move before session ends.

Elder Parole (S15A/A8855): The Senate version of this bill was referred to Crime Victims, Crime and Correction on January 5th and in the Assembly it was referred to Correction on January 19th.

*Please join us ~
\$27.00 per person
RSVP hatkeann@gmail.com
Looking forward to seeing you....*



*Annual June Dinner Meeting
Wednesday, June 15
5:30 pm
Turf Tavern
Dinner will be served at 6:00*

*Menu
Caesar Salad
Choice of Entrée
1. Eggplant Parmesan
2. Tuscan Chicken
3. Stuffed Pork
Cheesecake with Raspberries*

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.

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MEMBERSHIP FOR JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

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.

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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 _____

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Don't forget to renew your membership at the Annual Meeting, June 15