



**The**

**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023**  
**LOCAL VOTER**  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
**SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA**

Syracuse Metro LWV  
PO Box 11862  
Syracuse NY 13218  
Phone: (315) 396-8225  
Email: lwvsyr@gmail.com  
Web Sites:  
Local: [www.lwvsyr.org](http://www.lwvsyr.org)  
State: [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org)  
National: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)



**October 28th**  
**Early Voting Begins**

**November 1st**  
**First Wednesday Luncheon**

**November 7th**  
**Election Day**  
**Polls Open 6AM-9PM**

**November 9th—6:00pm**  
**LWVSyr Board Meeting**  
**Jamesville-Dewitt Library**

**December 6, 2023**  
**First Wednesday Luncheon**

**December 14th— 6:00pm**  
**LWVSyr Board Meeting**  
**Jamesville-Dewitt Library**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

Board Notes.....	3
Congressional Redistricting.....	4
NYS Ballot Proposals.....	4
Syracuse City Charter Referendum...	4
New NYS Voting Laws.....	5
New & Notes.....	6
LWVSyr Events.....	7
DEI Statement.....	8

**LWVSyr FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
**LUNCH & LEARN AT NOON**

**November 1, 2023**  
**11:30AM-1:00PM\***

**SPEAKER:**  
**ROBERT HARDING**

**TOPIC:**  
**CHALLENGES THE PRESS FACES COVERING POLITICS**

Robert Harding is a political reporter and columnist for The Citizen (Auburn) and [auburnpub.com](http://auburnpub.com). He has won numerous awards covering local, state and federal politics. He has a reputation of being a true journalist, gathering facts, digging for the truth and reporting on what is important. He will cover his experiences and challenges you find in exposing facts.

**LWVSyr FIRST WEDNESDAY**  
**LUNCH & LEARN AT NOON**

**December 6, 2023**  
**11:30AM-1:00PM\***

**SPEAKER:**  
**SUSAN LERNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMON CAUSE**

Common Cause is dedicated to empowering and protecting the voice of the people in our political process by promoting equal rights, opportunity and representation for all in New York State. Common Cause has chapters in 35 states. Susan Lerner has been instrumental in fighting for fair redistricting.

**BOTH MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE AT:**  
**Tully's Restaurant**  
**2943 Erie Blvd. East**  
**Syracuse NY 13224**

*\*Wait staff will be available to take lunch orders at 11:30 so we can begin our meetings promptly at Noon.*

# BOARD NOTES

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Margaret Bombard

## REMINDER

**Our league year runs from July 1st-June 30th. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so now.**

**You can use the renewal form on the last page of this newsletter or you may use Pay Pal.**

THANK YOU



*Do you know a student who would be interested?*

Students Inside Albany (SIA) is a conference sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. The program is designed to increase students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

The conference is interactive and brings together high school students from across the state to learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy-making arena. While in Albany, the students will have an opportunity to tour the state's capitol. The highlight for most students is the opportunity to shadow their senators and their assemblymembers for an afternoon attending session on the Chamber floors.

This year's conference is scheduled for May 19-22, 2024. There is no cost to the student. For more information and an application, please email Margrit Diehl: [margrit.diehl@gmail.com](mailto:margrit.diehl@gmail.com)



- Enter your address & your personal ballot appears
- Register to vote or check your registration
- Learn where your candidates stand on issues
- Find your polling place & early voting sites
- Discover upcoming debates & forums

## Officers

Leadership Team

Joan Durant  
Margrit Diehl  
Roberta Millert  
Amanda Slisz

Secretary  
Treasurer

Dona Wonacott  
Roberta Millert

## Directors

Education  
Program/ Issues & Advocacy

Margrit Diehl  
Margaret Chase  
Dorothy Wrase Hares  
Robin Brown-Bolewski  
Joan Durant  
Mary Kuhn  
Cheryl Matt  
Chanel Turnquest  
Joan Johnson  
Karen Chisholm  
Ellyn Lentz

Membership  
Voter Service

Events  
Social Media  
Publications  
DEI  
Development  
Development

## Off-Board Positions

Budget Director  
Healthcare Specialist  
Issues & Advocacy Advocate

Kathy Zabinski  
Dorothy Wrase Hares  
Kim Margosian

Nominating Committee

Linda Alario  
Trymeter Carter  
Sarah O'Neill  
\*Dorothy Wrase Hares  
\*Ellyn Lentz

\*Board Members

## LWV Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy

The League of Women Voters 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, and communities and policy maker 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, socioeconomic 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.

## NOVEMBER 7, 2023 GENERAL ELECTION

### EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS (ONONDAGA COUNTY)

ARMOND MAGNARELLI COMMUNITY CENTER AT MCCHESENEY PARK  
2300 Grant Boulevard, Syracuse NY 13208

BEAUCHAMP BRANCH LIBRARY  
2111 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13205

CAMILLUS FIRE DEPARTMENT (Rear Entrance)  
5801 Newport Rd, Camillus NY 13031

CLAY TOWN HALL COURTROOM (Rear Entrance)  
4401 Route 31, Clay NY 13041

DEWITT TOWN HALL COURTROOM  
5400 Butternut Drive, East Syracuse NY 13057

LAFAYETTE FIRE STATION #1 (Rear Entrance)  
2444 Route 11 South, LaFayette NY 13084

LYSANDER MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
8220 Loop Road, Baldwinsville, NY 13027

ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE – Mulroy Hall  
4926 Onondaga Road, Syracuse, NY 13215

NORTH SYRACUSE COMMUNITY CENTER  
700 South Bay Road, Syracuse, NY 13212

SYRACUSE COMMUNITY CONNECTION (SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CENTER)  
401-425 South , Syracuse NY 13204



### 2023 EARLY VOTING DATES & TIMES

**Saturday, October 28:**

9:00AM-5:00PM

**Sunday, October 29:**

9:00AM-5:00PM

**Monday, October 30:**

10:00AM-6:00PM

**Tuesday, October 31:**

10:00AM-6:00PM

**Wednesday, November 1:**

12:00PM-8:00PM

**Thursday, November 2:**

12:00PM-8:00PM

**Friday, November 3:**

10:00AM-6:00PM

**Saturday, November 4:**

9:00AM-5:00PM

**Sunday, November 5:**

9:00AM-5:00PM

### VOTER DEADLINE INFORMATION

**October 23th** - Last day for Board of Elections to receive absentee ballot application by letter, telefax, or through the absentee request portal.

**October 23rd** - Last day for change of address

**October 28th** - last day for IN-PERSON Voter Registration; MAIL IN registrations must be received by the Board of Elections.

**November 6th** -- Last day to apply IN-PERSON for an absentee ballot.

**November 7th** -- Last day to postmark absentee ballot. Must be received by the Board of Elections no later than November 14th. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than November 20th.

**November 7th** – Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to your local Board of Elections or to any poll site in your county.

## CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING UPDATE (again)

The decision to redraw districting lines for the 2024 Congressional election is still up in the air. When a lower court ruled that the 2022 lines should remain in place, a law suit was filed by 10 New York voters who wanted the state's Independent Redistricting Commission to submit new lines for the 2024 election. A mid-level state appeals court then ruled that new lines be drawn for 2024 stating that the competitive court-drawn lines in 2022 was only a temporary fix. Republicans argued that mid-decade redistricting was improper and the 2022 lines should remain in place. Moving forward Republicans appealed the lower court decision. The Court of Appeals has scheduled to address the appeal on November 15, 2023.

The State League has filed an *Amicus Brief* stating its position on re-opening the Congressional Redistricting process before the 2024 elections:

*On September 8<sup>th</sup> LWVNY filed a motion for leave to file an amicus brief in the case of Hoffmann et al vs. IRC. This is the case attempting to reopen Congressional redistricting before the 2024 elections and give the legislature a second chance. Our position is against mid-decade redistricting and our amicus states that we believe the constitutional process and deadlines should be respected per Harkenrider. On September 19th, the Court of Appeals refused to lift a stay of the lower court order in Hoffman that the IRC immediately work on new congressional lines. Therefore, any possible IRC and legislative process for new lines will have to wait until after the case is resolved by the Court of Appeals after its hearing in November. Our position is against mid-decade redistricting and our amicus states that we believe the go to: to lift a stay of the lower court order in Hoffman that the IRC immediately work on new congressional lines. Therefore, any possible IRC and legislative process for new lines will have to wait until after the case is resolved by the Court of Appeals.*

## NYS BALLOT PROPOSALS—2023 ELECTION

### PROPOSITION 1

#### Removal of Small City School Districts From Special Constitutional Debt Limitation

##### Description of Proposal:

The State Constitution limits how much debt a small city (a city with less than 125,000 people) school district, can incur. State law says their debt cannot be greater than five percent of the value of taxable real property; all other school districts' debt cannot be greater than ten percent. If this Constitutional Amendment passes, small city school districts would be eligible to have the same debt limit as other school districts as determined by state law.

##### Question as it Will Appear on the Ballot:

The proposed amendment to Article 8, section 4 of the Constitution removes the special constitutional debt limitation now placed on small city school districts, so they will be treated the same as all other school districts. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

### PROPOSITION 2

#### Extending Sewage Project Debt Exclusion From Debt Limit

##### Description of Proposal:

The State Constitution limits the debt counties, cities, towns, and villages can incur. This debt limit has an exception to not include debt for sewage treatment and disposal construction projects. The current sewer debt exception expires on January 1, 2024. This amendment extends the sewer debt exception for ten more years until January 1, 2034.

##### Question as it Will Appear on the Ballot:

The proposed amendment to Article 8, section 5 of the Constitution extends for ten years the authority of counties, cities, towns, and villages to remove from their constitutional debt limits debt for the construction of sewage facilities. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

## CITY OF SYRACUSE VOTERS ONLY

Local Law—of the City of Syracuse to amend Sections 5-503 entitled 'Scope of Audits' and Section 5-505 entitled 'Legal Counsel', of the City Charter as detailed in the legislation. Adopted by the Syracuse Common Council on 4-10-23. which Local Law will increase transparency and accountability between Governing bodies and the Citizens of Syracuse, by clarifying the scope of audits conducted by the City Auditor and, subject to Common Council approval, permitting the City Auditor to retain independent legal counsel.

*The referendum proposed by the current city auditor, would update the powers of the auditor to conduct independent reviews of city government including giving the office the power to issue subpoenas if needed to secure testimony or documents. It would also call for the ability to employ outside legal counsel because the city's corporation counsel would be representing the mayor's office in such matters. The Common Council approved the proposal. The mayor agreed changes should be made but vetoed the legislation stating he would like to see language in the measure that would require the auditor to follow municipal auditing standards established by the U.S Government in the proposal. The Common Council overrode the veto allowing it to be placed on the November ballot.*

## NEW VOTING LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW

On September 20, 2023 League members were invited to attend an event in celebration of several voting rights bills that Governor Hochul signed. They include the following:

- Legislation (S. 6195/A.1177) allows absentee ballots to be counted if they have been taped and show no signs of tampering.
- (S. 5984-A/A. 6132-A) creates a “Golden Day” on the first day of the early voting period when New Yorkers can register to vote and cast their ballots at their polling place all on the same day.
- Legislation (S. 6519-A/A. 1565-A) establishes a deadline for changing location of a polling place for an early voting period.
- Legislation (S. 7394-A/A. 7632-A) establishes a system for early voting by mail. This legislation will create a process allowing all eligible, registered New York State voters the opportunity to vote early by mail in advance of an election. A new application process will be developed to facilitate voter requests for early mail ballots pursuant to this legislation. Voters will be able to request mail ballots up to ten days prior to the election in which they would like to vote early by mail; boards of election will then provide mail ballots with postage paid return envelopes to all eligible and registered voters. Early mail ballots must then be mailed back to the appropriate board of elections no later than election day and must be received by the board no later than seven days after election day. This legislation represents a significant expansion of ballot access in New York State, and will provide millions of New York voters with an easy, safe, and secure means of voting early by mail ballot.
- Legislation (S. 5965-A/A. 4009-A) requires local jails to provide voter registration information to individuals of voting age being released from a local correctional facility.
- Legislation (S. 587/A.268) requires the New York State Board of Elections to develop and provide a training program for poll workers.
- Legislation (S. 1733-A/A.5180-A) requires local boards of education, BOCES, charter schools and non-public schools to adopt policies to promote student voter registration and pre-registration.
- Legislation (S. 7550/A. 7690) schedules the Presidential Primary Election for April 2, 2024.
- Legislation (S. 350/A. 5874) prohibits “forum shopping” in constitutional challenges for election cases.
- Legislation (S. 438/A. 928) prohibits “faithless electors” from impacting the outcome of a presidential election. New York has 29 electoral votes that go to the presidential candidate who receives the highest number of votes within the state. However, individuals chosen as members of the Electoral College can – and do – subvert democracy by people by casting their electoral votes for a candidate who did not win the highest number of votes. Under this new law, rogue electors who try to disregard the will of the people will be forced to resign.

***Sally Robinson, LWVNYS VP for Issues & Advocacy***

***Erica Smitka, LWVNYS Deputy Director***





## NEWS & NOTES

### Eliminating Off Year Elections

Many local elections, including county and town races, would be moved to even years under legislation passed in the closing days of the legislative session last June. Senate Bill 6197D and Assembly Bill 8560 would move these local elections to even-numbered years along with state and federal races. The legislation would not affect city elections, races such as county district attorney and judicial races protected by the state Constitution.

Some of the arguments for or against it include will it save money, increase turn out for local elections, or whether the length of the ballot could take attention off the local races.

Approval of the measure is divided mainly along political lines with republicans generally against it and democrats in favor. The League of Women Voters does not have a position on the legislation and the governor has not yet signed it into law.

### Impersonating Election Officials in NYS

The New York State Board of Elections has announced there have been cases reported throughout the state where voters have been approached individuals posing as election officials, seeking information about their voter registration. The Board of Elections has stated that they never send staff door to door soliciting information from voters and that this is a crime. Legislation has been introduced in Albany making this a felony.

Erica Smitka, Deputy Director of the New York State League of Women Voters has stated, “*We are supportive of any step forward that is taken to combat some of these blatant attempts to suppress the vote and to dissuade New Yorkers from heading to the polls.*”

### LWVSyr NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It's time for our Nominating Committee to begin its work for the 2023-2024 League year. If you would like to learn more about running for the Board, contact Dorothy Wrase Hares, chair of the Nominating Committee.

[dwhares@twcnv.rr.com](mailto:dwhares@twcnv.rr.com)  
315-380-0233



### GOLDEN DAY—OCTOBER 28, 2023

The New York State Board of Elections has approved all those eligible to vote in New York State may use an affidavit ballot and vote on Saturday, October 28th.

Referred to as “Golden Day,” October 28th is the final voter registration day and the first day of early voting.

### *A Message From Our State President*

With now weeks until the General Election on Tuesday November 7<sup>th</sup>, Leaguers are busy registering voters and creating plans for getting voters to the polls. As we gear up for this part of the election season *that can take the most of our energy*, let's pause for a moment and reflect on our purpose.

GOTV stands for “get out the vote” and signifies a concerted effort to register voters, educate voters about their ballots and increase voter turnout during elections. As Leaguers we know democracy is more resilient the more people are engaged with it and see themselves as agents of change in their own lives and communities. League remains one of the few non-partisan, grassroots organizations engaging others to create change. Our work both strengthens our democracy now and makes it more resilient for the future. And we do all of this by building relationships within our communities, listening to what our communities care about.

Thanks to all of you, our incredible members, League continues to fight the fight and do its good and satisfying work with voter registration drives, candidate forums, creating plans for how voters will get to the polls on election day, friends being certain friends are registered to vote and vote on election day.

*Nancy Rosenthal,*

*LWVNY President*

## ***MEET & GREET AT DRUMLINS***



The Syracuse Metro LWV hosted another social event with drinks and snacks on September 21st at Drumlins. Members welcomed our new members and

learned about volunteer opportunities during the 2023 election cycle.

The leadership team reminded us that 2023 is an “off year election,” where we choose most of our local leaders. These are the people that run the county, city and 19 towns that make up Onondaga County.

This is a busy time for the League with our main focus on registering new voters and providing information on the upcoming election.

**OCTOBER FIRST WEDNESDAY -  
LUNCH & LEARN MEETING**

At our 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday October Luncheon meeting we were fortunate to have as our speaker, Zeeshan James, Director of Care Management for RISE. RISE is an organization that provides services for refugees and immigrant families in Onondaga County. Their mission is to empower them to become economically independent and productive members of society who enrich their community while maintaining their cultural identity.



Our Events Coordinator, **Cheryl Matt**, has done a terrific job lining up programs for our First Wednesday Lunch and Learn events . We meet at Tully's on Erie Blvd, East, in Syracuse at 11:30 to order our lunch followed by our program at Noon. For our working members—we wrap these meeting up at 1:00PM. A great way to spend your lunch hour!

## DEI IS NOT A SILO

DEI fits into our League work. It intersects with all we do and should be a part of our conversations and planning around all our League work.





**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN AREA  
PO BOX 11862  
SYRACUSE NY 13218**

**November/December 2023**



**Syracuse Metropolitan Area League of Women (*and Men*) Voters  
Membership or Renewal Form**

**Join the LWVSYRMA as a member:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$60.00 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$85.00 Family \* \_\_\_\_\_ Student (full time student 16 years and older free)  
(Annual Membership—July 1—June 30)

**And or Show your SUPPORT for LWVSYRMA by donating:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ LWVSYR gifts support our local general operation fund

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ LWVNYS Education Foundation (tax-deductible) gifts support our local educational efforts (ask your employer if they have a Matching Gift Program that will double or triple your donation)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Family Membership two in same household

Please mail your check payable to: Syracuse Metro LWV, PO Box 11862, Syracuse NY 13218 or  
pay by Pay Pal at [www.lwvsyr.org](http://www.lwvsyr.org)

**THANK YOU**

