



# The Leaguer

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY  
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## NYS Bail Reform Laws



**April 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m.**

**SUNY Fredonia  
Williams Center  
S 204**

*Presenters*  
*Jessica G. Finkeldey,*  
*Fredonia Criminal Justice*  
*and*  
*Alexandra Harrington,*  
*UB Law School*

*Marcia Johnson, Moderator*

## Equal Rights Amendment

March 13<sup>th</sup> at Noon  
Brown bag Luncheon at Barker Library  
See page 2 for details.

## From the President

I am writing this on *International Women's Day*, March 8, 2023. I have heard a number of speeches and commentaries about this day, but none were as salient to me as the observations made by the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska at a women's conference, "Know Your Worth" in Abu Dhabi, UAE. She affirmed that we need to celebrate Women every day. She also expressed that equality is normal. I think that may mean dissimilar things to different people. To me it means; who would not like to be treated equally or similarly? The LWV feels too, that Equality Is Not Debatable. We have a brown bag luncheon on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at noon. The Barker Library will host us as we Zoom with Erica Smitka from LWVNY to discuss the Equal Rights Amendment of New York. Erica Smitka is the Deputy Director of the LWVNY. She earned her master's degree in public administration with a focus on on-profit management, from Syracuse University. She holds a BA in International Relations from SUNY Geneseo.

We will provide dessert and coffee.

The New York legislature passed the Equal Rights Amendment in its second consecutive session, officially bringing the amendment to New Yorkers for ratification on the 2024 ballot. Come and learn more about what this amendment means.

Several League members are starting a project to make a quilt of pictures of women who have made positive changes. I think we are going to have to limit it to women of the U.S., otherwise the quilt might be the size of New York State. We would like suggestions.

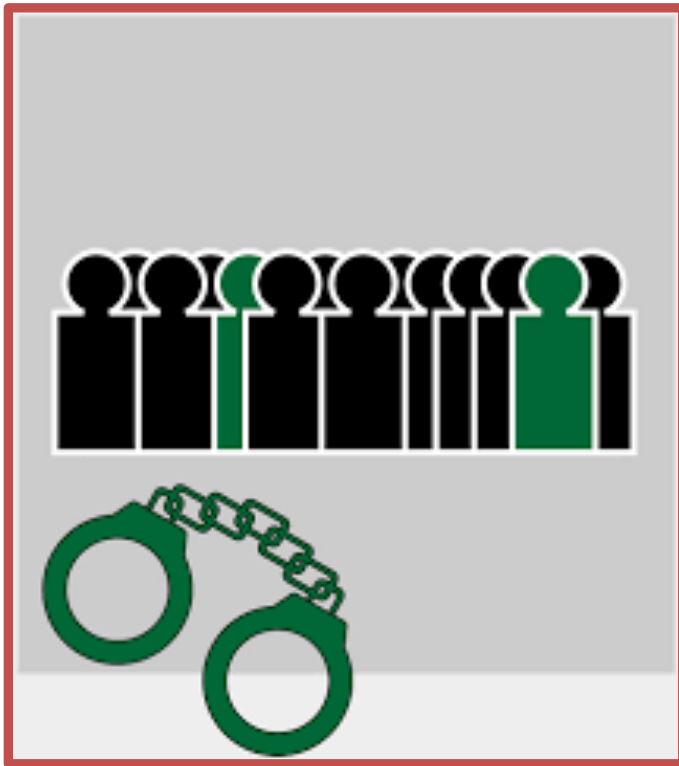
Our annual meeting will be coming up in May. Of course, we would love to have our members join the LWV Chautauqua board to take on select tasks. More people taking on one thing a year makes for a more diverse organization. We need input from our members and fresh ideas.

We will be having some elections coming up in November. Help with Voter Services. For example, helping out with candidate forums and promoting Get Out the Vote.

There are several events coming up. Turn the pages of the Leaguer to see about them.

Warmly,  
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/UCWIU7RI14CWbtKOfLISU-w/videos>



On January 1, 2020, landmark reforms governing bail and pretrial release decisions went into effect in New York State. The new laws eliminated bail for most misdemeanors and non-violent felonies, required judges to consider people's ability to pay in cases still legally eligible for bail, and included a new presumption of release on recognizance in all cases except when an individual poses a "risk of flight."

Amendments to the reforms went into effect in July 2020, moving some charges that had become ineligible for bail back into the bail-eligible category.

#### Some Key Findings:

- **Less Bail and Pretrial Detention:** Overall, judges' use of bail or direct remands to jail declined from 2019 to 2020; and then remained stable from 2020 to 2021.
- **Large 2021 Declines in Release on Recognizance (ROR):** From 2020 to 2021 there were declines for all charges in judges' frequency of releasing people on their own recognizance (without conditions).
- **Increases in Non-Monetary Conditions:** Consistent with the reformed statute's intent, judges use of supervised release increased from 2019 to 2021.
- **Regional Differences:** In general, NYC judges were less likely to set bail or remand than judges in Upstate or Suburban New York (both pre and post reform).
- **Higher Bail Amounts and Lower Rates of Payment:** Although the reform requires considering what people can afford when bail is set, judges set higher bail amounts within the 2020-to-2021 implementation period. In turn, the percentage of people who posted bail at arraignment significantly declined from 26% in 2019 to 18% in both 2020 and 2021.
- **Persisting Racial Disparities:** While all groups saw their lowest rates of bail/remand in the first quarter of 2020 and higher rates thereafter, Black people faced consistently higher rates of bail or remand throughout both 2020 and 2021 compared to Latinx and white people.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

## E for Everyone: Equal Rights Amendment explained

**MICHAEL WILLIAMS**  
Special to The Leader

As most Americans know, the battle for civil and political rights of minorities in America is a long-debated topic.

In the New York State Legislature, Albany has successfully passed the New York State Equal Rights Amendment with supermajorities two years in a row. The passage of this legislature means the Amendment will be on the ballot in 2024, giving New Yorkers the chance to enshrine equal rights, or equal opportunities for all.

This will make New York the 39th state to amend the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution, and put New York State on par with Canada, most of Western Europe and countries like Japan, New Zealand and Australia.

I sat down with League of Women Voters volunteers and Fredonia professors Jeanette McVicker and Kara Christina to discuss the Amendment. The League of Women Voters of Chautauqua County recently set up a table outside of McEwen Hall on Feb. 14 to register students to vote and to provide information about the amendment. The amendment will be voted on by New Yorkers in November 2024.

The volunteers made the case that we need the Amendment to give equal rights for all.

"There are certain groups that are not [currently] protected, like people with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, women and undocumented immigrants," McVicker said. "It's really important to pass [Amendments such as the ERA] to protect gender identity and sexual orientation rights."

McVicker and Christina could not stress enough the importance for people who identify as transgender to have the same medical rights as cisgender individuals.

New York has most, if not all, of these protections already enshrined into law. When asked about the necessity of the Equal Rights Amendment in particular, McVicker said, "We have piecemeal legislation to protect those rights, but we don't have a comprehensive piece of legislation that protects all groups."

The volunteers and professors also expressed that the Equal Rights Amendment has a better chance of standing up against a potential national contraceptive ban if the Supreme Court case *Griswold v. Connecticut* is overturned. They also laid out concerns about the makeup of our county's politics. As McVicker said, "To think we're in a blue state and we're safe is a false notion,

especially in a red part of the state like Western New York."

They stated that the Amendment is "not just for women," and that "immigration status or disability status ... should [also] be protected," McVicker said. "There's an indirect economic protection for people in those protected categories."

While New York State has some of the highest minimum wages and union rates in America, it also has some of the highest poverty and homelessness rates. It's not just New York City and other big cities like Syracuse or Buffalo driving up this number. For example, Chautauqua County has a 17% poverty rate, higher than the state average.

The Equal Rights Amendment will be on the ballot in November for the 2024 election, which will be a big year for elections with people voting for President and Senate. If the Amendment passes, it will put New York on par with the rest of America and the developed world when it comes to protecting the rights of underprivileged communities in New York.

I contacted State Senator George Borello, and State Assembly member Andy Goddell for comment, who both voted against the Amendment. I received no response from either.



League of Women Voters volunteers Judi Lutz Wood and Pat Kirell speak to a Fredonia student about voting opportunities. Photo by DREW PALUCH | Photo Editor.

**"To think we're in a blue state and we're safe is a false notion, especially in a red part of the state like Western New York."**

**- Jeanette McVicker,  
LWV volunteer and  
Fredonia professor**





**League of Women Voters of NYS**  
**60th Biennial Convention**  
**June 2-4, 2023**  
**Crowne Plaza - Desmond Hotel**  
**Albany**

Convention is an opportunity

- to meet and network with League leaders from all over the state in person!
- to make new friends and renew old friendships
- to learn what's forthcoming in League operations
- to improve your League's communications and visibility
- to strengthen your League by working together, sharing experiences, learning from each other, and being inspired
- to celebrate our successes

You will leave with more knowledge, new ideas and motivation to make your League better able to reach its goals.

On Saturday morning, we have workshops on a number of interesting topics and you are sure to learn something new for your League. And, information sessions and caucuses held on Friday and Saturday evenings will introduce you to new ideas from other Leagues and help you determine how to voice your opinions and votes on Sunday's business meeting.

It is a wonderful exercise of grassroots democracy in action. Delegates representing the local Leagues come together to make the important decisions that will guide us through the next two years including the election of officers and directors, and the adoption of a budget, bylaws amendments, and our state program for 2023-2025. **Plenary sessions will be held on Saturday, June 3, and Sunday, June 4.**

Come early for additional opportunities! A **pre-convention program is scheduled for Friday, June 2:**

- Hear what Libby Post, Communications Consultant, has to share on communications and join small groups discussion on ways to improve our communication and visibility of the League
- Join us for a welcome reception on Friday evening
- Attend caucuses on Friday evening on various topics



## *All Things Equal - The Life and Trials of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

- SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023
- 7:30 PM 9:00 PM
- REG LENA ,116 EAST 3RD STREET, JAMESTOWN, NY, 14701

An evening with a great and compassionate icon of straight-thinking American justice emerges an RBG who is not only “notorious” but victorious as she takes a stand for ordinary people facing the many challenges of a changing world.

March 13th at Noon Equal Rights Amendment Barker Library  
April 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. NYS Bail Reform Laws, Williams Center  
May 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

lwv@lwvchautauqa.org, 679-1774



*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  
Kara Christina  
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

.

Check payable to LWV Chautauqua County. Please consider adding a donation!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of additional member in household: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

LWV is not just for Women!!!

Area(s) of Interest

Programming \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Lobbying \_\_\_\_\_

Voter Services: Voter Registration \_\_\_\_\_ Debates \_\_\_\_\_

Take me to Vote \_\_\_\_\_ (Schools)

Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_ Civics Education \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_