

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKHAVEN**

**NOVEMBER 2020**



**WHAT WAS IT LIKE WHEN YOU VOTED?**

**We invite you to share your experience**

**Did you vote early?**

**Did you vote absentee? mail in your ballot?**

**Did you vote on Election Day?**

**How do you think that could voting be improved?**

**Monday**

**November 16, 2020**

**7 pm**

**By zoom**

**The zoom link (with phone numbers) will be sent**

**by email the day before.**

LWV of BROOKHAVEN

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## PRESIDENT’S PAGE

At our meeting on November 16 we hope that we will find out how Election Day went for you and others. This year saw so many changes that we thought it would be good to see whether they improved the election process.

New York State introduced Early Voting, making it possible to vote for any of the nine days before the election. Although there were only two sites in Brookhaven, the sites were open on weekends and some days were open late. Did early voting make it more convenient for you?

Even more important, the Governor made it possible for everyone to vote by absentee ballot. The New York State Legislature passed a “no excuse absentee ballot bill” last year. It will take place only if it passes the Legislature in 2021. Do you think we should support it? Did it make voting easier? Did people find it a convenience, or did the concern about whether it would reach the Board of Election on time make it a worry?

Were the voters on line greeted by workers who were helpful, were they socially distant? Once you entered the polling place, were you sure you were safe? In some counties, voters were asked to have their temperature taken and sanitize their hands. Did the polling places you visited take precautions for safety? Were there enough poll workers to carry that out?

And what about disabled voters? Was their provision for separate lines for elderly or disabled voters? Did they wait on line with everyone else? If they needed assistance completing their ballot, were there workers to assist them? Did they have to stand up at the booth when they filled in their ballot?

Were there voters who needed help with English instructions? When a voter was given the ballot, did someone explain how to fill in the bubbles, or ask if he needed an explanation?

How did you feel about the campaigning—the TV ads, the mailed flyers, the phone calls? Did you find them helpful, or did you think they were hurtful? Did they help explain the candidate’s views? the candidate’s opponents views?

As I write this we are all waiting for the election results. Because New York allows voters to vote by absentee ballot and then also vote in person, election workers must discard any of the absentee ballots sent in by a voter who then votes in person. Absentee ballots will be accepted and counted if they are received in the mail by November 10, so the process of checking for duplication will continue for some time. Is that a problem? Should the deadline for postmarked absentee ballots be earlier? (Currently, they can be obtained and returned at the Board of Election as late as Election Day.)

**Many League members have worked as poll workers, and others volunteered to serve as poll watchers to call in problems. Thank you all for participating in the election process. We hope you will attend the meeting to inform us about what goes on behind the scenes, and what you think went well and what could be improved.**

## MARY LOUISE BOOTH—AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN

On November 2, after some re-scheduling, Tricia Foley introduced us to *Mary Louise Booth, An Extraordinary Woman*. Booth was born in Yaphank in 1831; the Yaphank Historical Society has restored her home and it is open to the public. It would be a good place for a League trip in the spring.

We thank Tricia for offering to “zoom” her presentation. It was our first general meeting with a speaker on zoom, and was a struggle but also an inspiration. As the host for the zoom, I had to learn how to share my screen to show slides. With the help of knowledgeable members, Tricia, and members of my family (who let me practice on them), I was successful. I am grateful for our members’ patience and feel inspired to learn more.

To follow up on Tricia’s presentation, her book, MARY LOUISE BOOTH, THE STORY OF AN EXTRAORDINARY 19TH CENTURY WOMAN, is available in many of our local libraries, or can be purchased.

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## OUR NEXT BOOK GROUP MEETING—NOVEMBER 19TH—1 PM

We will be reading *American Dialogue*, by Joseph E. Ellis. Walter Isaacson says, “Ellis knows that history is not simply about the past. It’s about the present having a conversation with the past. In this book, he discussed Thomas Jefferson and racism, John Adams and economic inequality, Jame Madison and constitutional law, and George Washington and foreign policy. “ To get directions to the meeting or find out more, contact Betsy Gaidry, ([tbgaidry@optonline.net](mailto:tbgaidry@optonline.net))

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## A NEW STUDY GROUP—ON HEALTH CARE

We are now organizing a committee to look at health care legislation for New York State. This study will be an update of the NYS LWV position which was discussed and agreed to many years ago. We will especially be looking at the financing of a single payer plan at the state level, and consideration of how it will affect Medicare. (No prior knowledge is necessary to become a committee member. We will be using materials provided by the NYS LWV.)

A League committee at the state level is proposing a revised position on health care. Our local committee will decide how best to present background information to our members in January so we can discuss and decide whether we agree with the state proposal. Please let Betsy know by email if you are interested in joining this committee. See pages 4 and 5 for a possible new position. ([tbgaidry@optonline.net](mailto:tbgaidry@optonline.net))

## THE PROPOSED NEW HEALTHCARE POSITIONS WITH FOOTNOTES 2021

*[Underlining indicates new wording]*

The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) believes that everyone should have access to essential physical and behavioral healthcare. New York State has a proper role in the regulation of health-care and must assure high quality care that is affordable and accessible to all.<sup>91</sup>

Resources should be devoted to health promotion and disease prevention so that people can take active responsibility for their own health. People should have opportunities to participate effectively in decisions regarding their personal health and in healthcare policy decisions. <sup>92</sup>

The League believes that New York State's primary role in healthcare is to assure that quality care is available to all New Yorkers. We believe that the state should provide planning and regulations to assure everyone, including the medically indigent, access to an essential level of quality physical and behavioral healthcare. Cost containment should be an important criterion in developing regulations. Such regulation, however, should not compromise the quality of care or its accessibility.

The League supports regulatory incentives to encourage the development of cost-effective alternative ways of delivering and paying for healthcare, appropriate to all areas of NYS, with coordination across regulatory bodies to avoid undue delays and contradictory, duplicative regulations. Delivery programs may take place in a variety of settings, including the home and online, and must provide quality care, meaning consistent with "standard of care" guidelines, by trained and licensed personnel, staffed adequately to ensure their own and patient safety.<sup>93</sup>

Coordination of services is essential to assure that community needs are met. As public health crises increasingly reveal, NYS should protect the health of its most vulnerable populations, urban and rural, <sup>94</sup> in order to protect the health of everyone. In addition, all programs should be evaluated regularly. Provider reimbursement should include incentives for efficiency and for disease prevention and health promotion activities. Public health, environmental health and research activities should be continued.

Decisions on medical procedures that would prolong life should be made jointly by patient, family, and physician. Patient decisions, including those made prior to need, should be respected.

The League supports uniform eligibility and coverage of essential healthcare services, both physical and behavioral, ideally, including coverage of services such as vision, dental, hearing, and long-term care through public financing.<sup>95</sup> Access to optional insurance coverage for care not covered by public financing should be available. The League has a strong commitment to an emphasis on preventive care, health education, and appropriate use of primary care services.

( footnotes on page 5)

## FOOTNOTES FOR THE PROPOSED POSITION

91. In both the Healthcare Position and the Financing Healthcare Position we have substituted essential for basic, which is newer terminology and reflects current practice.
92. Similarly, throughout both documents we have substituted patients or people for consumers, reflecting research that medical care does not function like a marketplace.
93. The new statement about coordination across regulatory bodies embodies ideas only implied in the original position. The new statement defining quality care reflects LWV NY's work on safe staffing.
94. Covid-19 hits rural residents harder: "Rural areas tend to have older populations than the national average, with more chronic health conditions that raise the risk of developing more severe cases of COVID-19. They have fewer health care providers and more uninsured residents, meaning residents often wait longer before seeking medical help," June 2020. <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-rural-america-vulnerable-covid-cities.html>. Covid-19 kills Blacks, Latinx, Indigenous at triple the rate of whites: "non-Hispanic black persons, Hispanics, Indians/Alaska Natives...[have] rates of hospitalization or death from COVID-19 [three to five times that of] non-Hispanic white persons," while Indigenous Americans have an age-adjusted hospitalization rate for Covid-19 of 5.6 times that of non-Hispanic White Americans, CDC 6/12/20, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>. "Universal health care is a national security issue," March 2020, "Covid-19 is exposing the dangerously high costs of our incomplete safety net. When people lack adequate health insurance, they don't go to the doctor unless and until they are very ill... rationing access to critical health care resources on the basis of ability to pay is not just unjust, but also bad for public health." "The root cause of health insecurity [is] the lack of access of the most vulnerable people to essential health services ... Ultimately, it's the absence of universal health coverage that is the greatest threat to health security... prevention is not prevention is not only better than cure: it's cheaper," Forward to *WHO 2018 Playbook on Managing Epidemics*. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/managing-epidemics/en/>
95. Medicaid requires these for children. Medicare does not cover them, failing seniors. Our new language still separates them as "preferably" (rather than "supports") but "ideally" appreciates that seniors live longer, healthier lives when they eat food, have conversations, see well enough to navigate safely, like younger Americans. Long-term care is driven by the disabilities community, which seeks to allow members to renaub oriductduve — both House and Senate M4A bills include LTC provisions.

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### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

FREDELLE ROBINSON—SETAUKET

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## OUR AD PAGES

We appreciate the local businesses and friends of the League who have supported us with paid advertisements for many years. Some have moved, or, like George Rehn, passed away, and we hope to add new friends and their ads. Do you know of a business, a medical provider, or just a friend, who would like to place an ad in our VOTER to help pay for it. We mail each ad holder a copy of the VOTER (10 months each year) to keep them informed. Let possible advertisers know that we are a nonpartisan political organization that influences public policy through advocacy and education. The application in on page 7 for you to print.

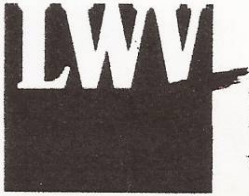
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### ELECTION RESULTS TO COME – BD OF ELECTIONS TO START COUNTING 11/9

In Suffolk County, 211,763 absentee ballots were requested for the election and 209,986 were sent in. Democrats requested 98,174 ballots and sent in 97,353, while Republicans requested 49,549 absentee ballots and sent in 49,102. A total of 655 ballots have been canceled and 1,366 were inactive.

Watch for results for New York State Assembly and Senate, propositions One and Two.





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## POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION TASK FORCE OF SUFFOLK COUNTY

In our Summer Voter we printed an article about the order given by Governor Cuomo to municipalities requiring them to develop plans to reinvent and modernize police strategies and programs in their community by April 2021. The towns in the county, including especially those on the East End, which are not part of the Suffolk County Police Force, have begun working on their taskforces. Suffolk County has created its Reform & Reinvention Task Force to receive input from community and key stakeholder groups to provide the essential foundation necessary to develop a plan that supports safe, effective, and equitable policing. Its website, Police Reform and Reinvention Task Force of Suffolk County, has biographies of the 12 members, a review of the order from Governor Cuomo (Foundations for Reform), a review of the history of policing in Suffolk County, listing of resources, and a listing of the listening session for each precinct (you can register to listen or to speak). It also includes the John Finn Institute Report, which shows the data taken from traffic stops..

Vanessa Baird-Street, Deputy County Executive, and Jon moooo, , head up the task force. Its members are split between county and police officials and other community groups. Five are Suffolk County legislators, six work in law enforcement. The other fifteen members are from a variety of faith, minority or local advocacy groups. Suffolk County police and county officials have described the bias training where 65% of the force, or 1,600 officers, have been trained. They also cite their de-escalation techniques and new diversity initiatives which have resulted in a more diverse department.

The County will also be releasing surveys to find out the feelings of residents toward police, both those who have and have not had encounters wit the police. The John Finn Institute will be conducting the community surveys, which will perform a “targeted oversampling” of people of color to be sure they hear from minority communities. The Task Force has also published a schedule for the listening sessions, one for each precinct, during which community members are invited to call in, or just listen. It is an opportunity to talk about ideas for improving police-community relations, incidents that you or someone you know may want to report, or other police relate issues. There is also a schedule of listening dates for those who do not feel comfortable speaking to the police.

Born out the Black Lives Matter movement and the suggestion to “defund the police,” this is an opportunity to consider ways of improving policing and suggesting better methods for the county to respond to problems of mentally ill persons, domestic violence, or homelessness. Training in restorative justice strategies, for instance, could be a greater part of the de-escalation training that is underway. (The listening sessions in English and Spanish for the individual precincts will be held on 10/27/2020, 11/04/2020, 11/11/2020, 11/17/2020, 12/01/2020, 12/09/2020, 12/15/2020, 12/21/2020. with Precinct 5 on 12/1, 6 on 12/9. and 7 on 12/15. At the website, you can register to listen or speak, and the completed sessions are on line in case you wish to listen.) It is a chance to incorporate real community policing, as suggested in the Governor’s Resources and Guide.



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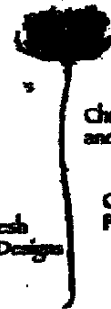
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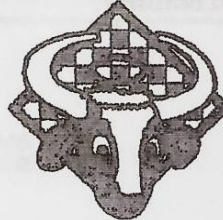
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**NOVEMBER**

Monday            Nov 16    7 pm — ELECTION 2020

How did the electoral process work for you?

Thursday        Nov 19    1 pm — Book Group at Betsy Gaidry's, 1 pm

Joseph J. Ellis, *American Dialogue*

ZOOM LINKS WILL BE SENT FOR EACH MEETING

WITH PHONE NUMBERS