

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROOKHAVEN

P. O. Box 92. Setauket, NY 11733

V O T E R MARCH 2025

STUDY OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Leagues across the country are studying
the Federal Judiciary to create a
LWV-US advocacy position.

All members are invited to attend

WHERE: Longwood Public Library, 800 Middle
Country Road, Middle Island

WHEN: Saturday, March 29, 10 am to noon

PRESIDENT'S PAGE-'

On March 4, the LWV-US urged local leagues to create community gatherings to bring together people in reflection, action, and solidarity to protest the shift to direct threats to our Constitution from our national government. In Brookhaven, we were joined by Common Cause, The Worker's Circle, VOICE-Buffalo and many other organizations speaking for their members. We urged our members and friends to show their support by shining a light in their window at 8:30 pm as a LIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY.

We are asking members to contact their congressional representatives to ask them to vote against the SAVE Act (HR 8281). It would require any voter who needs to register or re-register to bring documents proving their identity. Since many might not have actual birth certificates or marriage licenses, and since they will have to present them in person, we worry that we will not be able to register new people. During a year that celebrates women we hope it will be defeated.

And on the good side, as noted in Erica's Weekly Legislative Update, there are signs that the state legislature may pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Bill that would reduce plastic pollution and packaging waste and ban 14 of the most dangerous chemicals. (S1464/A1749)

The Elder Parole Bill ~~may also be passed, making some seniors~~ eligible for parole. (S454/A614).

New York State is getting closer to having Automatic Voter Registration, a bill that was introduced in 2019 and passed in 2020, but has not yet been implemented.

The League sends condolences and love to Carol Gavin and Joan Kiely, in memory of their losses this past weekend.

OUR STUDY ON THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

The study will be addressing concerns and clarifying judicial accountability, transparency, independence, and ethics. We will also be looking at the public perception of the Supreme Court and reforms that have been considered. The scope of our study focuses on the US Supreme Court and the other Article III federal courts.

Article III of the constitution establishes “one supreme Court and such inferior courts as Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.” In the federal court’s present system, there are 94 district courts and 13 courts of appeals, which sit below the Supreme Court. Article III judges and justices are appointed for life and can only be removed through impeachment. Once appointed, the salary can’t be lowered. (The state courts are outside of this system and are under each state’s constitution and rules.)

The three branches of the federal government—legislative, executive and judicial—exist within a constitutional system of checks and balances. Each branch is formally separate from the other two, The Constitution often requires cooperation among the branches. Federal laws, for example, are passed by Congress and signed by the President. The judicial branch, in turn, has the authority to decide the constitutionality of federal laws and resolve other disputes over federal law, but judges depend upon the executive branch to enforce court decisions.

At the March 29 meeting we will provide a lot more information to stimulate discussion and help you reach a consensus that will allow the LWVUS to take action for years to come.

BOOK GROUP—MARCH 24—1 pm

The book group will be reading *Streets of Gold: America’s Untold Story of Immigrant Success* by Ran Abramitzky and Leah Boustan, Professors of Economics. The meeting will be held at Betsy Gaidry’s—please contact her at tbgaidry@optonline.net if you would like to attend.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR LUNCHEON

APRIL 11, NOON, AT TOAST IN PATCHOGUE

ALL ARE WELCOME

Our speaker, Lawrence Levy, is the Executive Deam of the National Center for Suburban Studies and Vice-President for Economic Development and Professional Studies at Hofstra University. As a journalist he was known for blending national trends and local perspectives. Dean Levy has worked with Hofstra's academic and local communities to shape an innovative interdisciplinary agenda for suburban study. He was invited by Harvard University to lecture on the changing suburbs.

At NCSS, Dean LeVy has co-authored major regional studies, including the LI2035 Sustainability Action Plan and all five Long Island Regional Economic Development Plans. He is especially proud of organizing the Hofstra Celebration of Suburban Diversity which has dramatically raised Hofstra's profile as a place that values diversity. He has been involved in the world of journalism and politics as contributor to many local television stations and newspapers.

The luncheon will be held at Toast, 46 East Main Street, Patchogue. To reserve your place, contact Nancy Marr, 631 793-2124 or send a check for \$40 to LWV of Brookhaven, PO Box 92, Setauket.

This article was printed in the *Times Beacon Record*

Making Democracy Work: Empowering Voters and Defending Our Democracy

by *Judie Gorenstein*

The League of Women Voters (LWV) was founded in 1920, the year that the 19th amendment was passed, giving women throughout the country the right to vote. A major goal at that time was to educate women to be informed voters. Over the years, the LWV has remained a grassroots, nonpartisan organization but its mission evolved to encouraging informed and active participation of citizens in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Now, 105 years later, it is more important than ever that the LWV “Empowers Voters and Defends Our Democracy.”

Long Island is served by eight Leagues: four in Suffolk County (Brookhaven, Huntington, Smithtown, and The Hamptons, Shelter Island and the North Fork) and four in Nassau County (Central Nassau, East Nassau, Port Washington/Manhasset, and Great Neck). Although the communities they reach may be socially and economically diverse and the size of each League varies, they have the same core values and mission. Working together through regional zoom meetings builds strength. and a regional director from LWVNY facilitates the meetings. Last month’s meeting began with the director stating “Our democracy is being tested like never before... We acknowledge problems but focus on solutions. Otherwise we become powerless.”

Strong Leagues with engaged members are needed to accomplish goals. Leadership, membership, and orientation strategies are shared. Membership increases as a result of not only what is happening all around us but also by increasing visibility in the community via street and volunteer fairs, networking with diverse groups, and generally meeting people where they are. The Leagues then use orientation meetings to not only educate new members on the values, policies and activities of League but to engage these new members, survey their interests and get them involved with hands-on experience.

Leagues will continue to register and educate voters and get out the vote. But this year, all our Leagues are committed to doing whatever they can to make certain the Safeguard American Elections (SAVE) Act does not pass. Rather than safeguarding our elections, the SAVE Act silences voters by making it harder, if not impossible, for millions of eligible voters to register or reregister to vote. It undermines our election integrity based on lies about who is voting.

There is NO evidence of widespread non-citizen voting in federal or state elections. Voters are already required to show identification to vote. The New York State voter registration form already clearly states that it is a crime to procure a false registration or to furnish false information to the Board of Elections. You must affirm you are a citizen and enter either your DMV driver's license number or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

.Under the SAVE ACT This information would no longer be sufficient, and on-line or mail-in registration would not be valid. New voters, or voters with registration changes (e.g. new address) would have to go physically to their County Board of Elections with proof of citizenship, primarily an original birth certificate or passport. A married women who has changed her name would not only need her original birth certificate, but also her marriage certificate. The SAVE Act puts an undue burden on voters of color, rural voters, tribal voters, military members and married women.

Would organizations like the LWV even be able to hold voter registration drives in high schools, colleges and the community? We know our democracy works best when everyone participates. The SAVE Act works to do exactly THE OPPOSITE. Millions of active voters would be unable to satisfy the SAVE Act's requirements. There are about 12 million American citizens who cast a ballot in 2020 but who would be functionally unable to register to vote if the SAVE Act were passed.

The League of Women Voter continues to monitor and oppose the SAVE Act. This bill is being fast-tracked in the House and should it pass both houses of Congress and make it to the president's desk he is certain to sign it. Leagues all across the country are networking with other organizations to oppose the SAVE Act;, educating their community and calling their representatives in Congress. Enfranchising voters is a core principle of the LWV. Defending and protecting our democracy is what we do!

For more information and data, go to Brennan Center for Justice at NYU: The SAVE Act Would Hurt Americans Who Actively Participate in Elections <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/save-act-would-hurt-americans-who-actively-participate-in-elections>.

Judie Gorenstein has been voter service chair of LWV of Suffolk County and past president of LWV of New York State, and is currently on LWV Huntington's Leadership Team.

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