



League of Women Voters of Cortland County VOTER

Jan. Feb. 2014 Contact: *Linda Eberly, Editor: Mary Beilby beilby@gmail.com*
Visit us at www.lwvcortland.org and at lwvcc on facebook.

Our Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**STUDENTS IN ALBANY
APPLICATIONS DUE FEB. 7
ALL INFORMATION IS AT
WWW.LWVCC.ORG**

NEW! League and Good Government Groups Respond to Moreland Commission Report

STATING THAT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS “MUST GO,” GROUPS CALL FOR NEW CAMPAIGN FINANCE ENFORCEMENT AGENCY TO REGULATE AND ENFORCE CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS FOR BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCING OF ELECTIONS

In a letter to Governor Cuomo, New York State’s leading government reforms organizations today called for quick and comprehensive action to implement The Moreland Commission to Investigate Public Corruption’s recommendations

The groups pointed out that public financing of elections, which they referred to as a “critical component of reform” goes “hand in hand with strong enforce-

CALENDAR

January 15 – Wednesday: 5:00 pm Forum on NY Health Insurance/Exchanges (Linda Eberly)

Feb 3– Lobby Day in Albany p.

Feb. 13 8am Community Restaurant—Board Mtg. (open)

Feb (details tba) forum on the history, geology, economics and ecology the of Cortland Co. Landfill

March 8 Regional Workshop in Binghamton (details below)

March 10-11, The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW58) United Nations Headquarters in NYC

May 18-21, 2014– Students in Albany

ment.” Accordingly, the groups urged action to drastically change the way that the state administers and regulates its campaign finance system by creating a new enforcement agency and eliminating the current role the New York State Board of Elections plays in campaign finance matters.

In their letter to the governor, the groups further wrote, “We are not at all surprised by the Commission’s findings that the [State Board of Elections] is essentially useless in enforcing the state’s campaign finance law. However, we are shocked by the report’s findings that staff’s pleas for meaningful work assignments were ignored at best and punished at worst. Those stories underscore just how the Board puts the needs of the political parties well ahead of the interests of the public it purports to serve.” Referring to the New York State

Board of Elections, the groups' letter simply stated, "The Board has to go."

The groups called for the governor to convene a public meeting with the legislative leaders on the Commission's recommendations, use his "bully pulpit" in next month's State of the State address, and then barnstorm New York to build public pressure on lawmakers to act. The groups urged, "There can be no doubt that this report has offered you an historic opportunity to dramatically change the ethical culture of Albany. This clarion call for change cannot be ignored." Link to the full letter is on the LWVNY.org website.

Update on Human Trafficking

New York State is creating a statewide system of eleven specialized criminal courts to handle prostitution cases and provide services to help wrest human- and sex-trafficking victims from the cycle of exploitation and arrest, said the state's chief judge, Jonathan Lippman. The courts will be up and running by the end of October, 2013.

Women's Equality Agenda

It's time for an upgrade to New York's laws for women. Please continue to contact your assembly members and your senators and let them know that you want the women's equality act to become law this year. Please also respond to requests from the women's equality coalition for letters to the editor on all the issues that the women's equality act addresses. Those issues include equal pay, sexual harassment, discrimination against women, pregnant women in the workforce, sex trafficking, reproductive health, and domestic violence orders of protection.—from NYS Voter

2014 Lobby Day Advocacy Training Day): NEW DATE OF MONDAY,

FEB. 3RD Want to come learn more about the League's positions and what we expect for action this legislative session? Lobby Day (or more accurately, Advocacy Training Day) will

be held on **MONDAY, FEB. 3, 2014**. **The date of Lobby Day has changed from Tuesday, Feb. 4 to Monday, Feb. 3rd – please note the change in date!** All members are encouraged to attend. Explanation of the state League's positions and projected action will be discussed. The state League Issue Specialists will present information on the current status of legislation in their areas. Attendees will be able to observe either the Senate or Assembly from the Galleries and attend committee meetings scheduled for that day (schedules won't be available until the week prior to Lobby Day). If members wish, they can schedule meetings with their own legislators. **call Katrina ([518-465-4162](tel:518-465-4162)) by Jan. 17 to reserve your spot! We are charging \$10 per person to attend – but it will include lunch this year!**

Regional Workshops

The state League is organizing regional workshops around the state during March and April 2014. Currently, dates have been set as follows: Saturday, March 8 Binghamton Public Library, Binghamton;
Saturday, March 29 Cold Spring Harbor Library, Cold Spring Harbor (Long Island) Additional dates and locations are being set for Albany and Rochester. Mark your calendar now to attend one in your area.

Workshops will include topics such as Vote 411, Membership and Leadership Issues, Fundraising, Issues and Advocacy, Candidate Forums Issues (organizing and moderating), and more! Local Leagues will be sharing their best practices and success stories - come network with Leagues in your area and learn what more you could be doing. All members are invited to attend all or part of the day (all Saturdays from 10:00am - 4:00pm) and all local League Board members are STRONGLY encouraged to attend at least one of the workshops. More details coming soon.

Election Reform

Kate Doran, LWV of New York City, with Sally Robinson, LWVNY President, presented testimony for the state League before the Assembly Standing Committee on Election Law on December 9. The testimony focused on our positions for a single, June primary, and issues of voter accessibility such as

ballot design, early voting, voter registration procedures and poll worker training. The testimony is posted on the state League website. During the Committee meeting, Assemblywoman Schimel praised the League and Jane Thomas, President of LWV of Port Washington/Manhasset, for the Leagues' work on voter services - great job, Jane.

Transportation Issues

Gladys Gifford, schuford@earthlink.net

Now is the time to prepare for the NYS legislative session. Here's an update from our previous efforts and information to help us support a sustainable and effective transportation system throughout our state. Reminder: elected officials tell us that they do not hear about transportation issues from their constituents. So, let's make some noise!

As always, transportation is a concern in the NYS budget. What will Cuomo propose that impacts transportation funding? Appropriate action: remind NYS legislators that any action to "reduce tax burden" must continue to support improved transit funding in the 2014-15 budget.

The BRIDGE Act (aka S1071B) was passed by both houses of the legislature, but vetoed by Gov. Cuomo this summer. Reminder: this bill pushes NYS to abide by the law enacted in 1991, a "lock-box" which intended for the gasoline tax to be used for road and bridge repair and maintenance. Currently revenues from the gas tax are siphoned off for the general fund, supporting the NYSDOT. The LWVNYS supported this bill, as did the editorial board of the Buffalo News. Appropriate action: ask the governor: why the veto?

New York Public Transit Association testified at a hearing held 12-5-13 before the NYS Assembly transportation commit-

tee. They recommended that structural changes be made to state-wide funding for public transit, such that a small portion of state sales tax revenue be directed to upstate transit agencies-- as is currently done for downstate transit agencies. I'll have more to share on this at the LWVNYS meeting in Albany, Feb. 3rd. Appropriate action: ask local legislators to consider supporting such a change.

The current Federal transportation bill, "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21), is set to expire on 9-30-14. Meanwhile, Congressman Blumenauer (D-OR) has introduced a bill to gradually raise the Federal gas tax to a level which accounts for inflation. For more information, see Transportation for America t4america.org for updates. Appropriate action: maintain relationships with our Congressional representatives, especially to monitor closely the next transportation bill, after MAP-21.

I am planning to participate in the advocacy training event offered by LWVNYS in Albany, February 3, 2014. I'll bring information and materials to help you engage your local League in the vital work of advocating for sustainable transportation policies that have great impact on all of our communities.

VOTE 411

Marianna Stout, marianna.stout@att.net
Leagues used Vote411 in different way for the 2013 General Election. Some Leagues covered the primary. Some covered all candidates in all races in their area, others covered races for specific offices, and some covered only hotly contested races. The state League covered the Supreme Court Judicial District races and the six state-level propositions, with assistance from local Leagues.

Over 32,000 people from New York State visited the Vote 411 website during this

year's election season; that is a 163% increase over the 12,000 who visited the website in the last comparable local election season (2011).

Youth Programs

Judie Gorenstein, JudieL728@aol.com

As of Dec 14, 40 local Leagues and ILOs have responded that they will be sending students to Students Inside Albany Conference. Twenty two of these Leagues indicated the number students they will be sending with nine Leagues indicating plans to send two students. The exciting news is that four Leagues who did not participate last year, indicated they will this year. Those Leagues are: Cortland County, Steuben County and Bedford, Lewisboro, N. Salem. Don't let your League miss out on this wonderful opportunity. This year's program promises to be better than ever with a boat ride around Albany and a mock debate and election with our students. The recruitment tools are available on the state website (click on Youth Programs) or call Katrina at the state office (518-465-4162).

UN Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW58) will be held from March 10-21, 2014, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The priority theme is "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls". The Commission will also evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from CSW55 in 2011 on "Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work". LWVUS invites its members to attend this important conference. Please contact Mary Fox at mvfox@optonline.net attend no later than January 15, 2014. We are limited in the number of participants--so please register with Mary early.

Local League News

"Detroit is Bankrupt: Could it Happen Here?" was the topic of a panel discussion organized by the LWV Rye, Rye Brook and Port Chester. Four outstanding panelists, with diverse viewpoints, focused on key aspects of New York State and municipal fiscal management and policy in the context of business, union, taxpayer, political and legal constraints and priorities.

Many local Leagues moderated and assisted with timing, greeting and monitoring microphones at the educational forums on the Common Core sponsored by State Education Commissioner King across the state. Karl Wokan, Co-President of LWV Broome-Tioga, moderated the forum in Binghamton and Laura Ladd Bierman, LWV of Albany County, moderated the forum in Albany. Erin Malloy moderated the forum on Common Core for the LWV of Bedford, Lewisboro and No. Salem. Other local Leagues around the state also helped to keep forums orderly while providing the opportunity for the public's voice to be heard on this controversial topic.

LWV of Huntington co-sponsored a forum on the upcoming constitutional convention question in our state and some ideas for transforming NYS government to be more efficient and more responsive to our fellow citizens. The guest facilitator was James Coll an adjunct professor of American and Constitutional history at Nassau Community College, an NYPD Detective and the founder of ChangeNYS.org.

**Making New York State Work
2014 Legislative Agenda**

Campaign Finance Reform

Support lower contribution limits, increased disclosure and a system of small donor matching funds. In particular, support stronger and effective campaign finance enforcement with increased penalties for violations.

Election Reform

Improve election processes to extend, encourage and protect voting, including paperless and Election Day registration, early voting, better ballot design, improved polling place management/poll worker training, a single June primary, and measures to ensure the integrity of all ballots.

Natural Resources

Support protection and management of New York's natural resources in the public interest, including energy conservation and energy options from renewable sources.

Women's Equality Agenda

Support equality for women and their families through preserving access to reproductive health care, ensuring fair treatment at work, and helping survivors of violence.

Other League Positions

The League also has positions on other Government Issues including Ethics, Transparency, and Individual Liberties, as well as Health Care, the Judiciary, State Finances, and Social Policy, including Transportation Policy, under which we can and do take action.

The 2014 League Legislative Agenda brochure will be available in early January. Contact your local League to receive a copy. It will also be posted on the state League website.

League Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, & influences public policy through education and advocacy.

2013/14 DUES REMINDER: Dues are now due and are **essential** to the LWV. A large share of your dues goes to the national and state Leagues that provide direction and useful resources to our local league. Our only sources of funding are our annual membership dues and contributions made by friends of the League. Please urge friends and acquaintances who support the mission of the League to join. We now have a category for friends at \$15/year .

JOIN US & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

YES! I Would like to join the League. 2013/14 dues enclosed.

In addition, I would like to contribute \$ _____

Please send a gift membership to:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (home) _____ (work) _____

E-MAIL _____

Send to: Lenore Schwager, 42 Pearl St. Cortland, NY 13045



2013 Students Inside Albany Summary

This year we had 55 students from 37 local Leagues attend *Students Inside Albany*. The students came from all over New York State from Long Island to Buffalo and Plattsburgh to Binghamton. They ranged from sophomores to seniors in high school. They were energetic and enthusiastic to learn about New York State government.

On Sunday evening, Lisa Kissinger, Social Studies Supervisor in Shenendehowa Central Schools, and her brother, Mark Kissinger, NYS Department of Health Long Term Care Division Director, presented information on the roles of the various branches of New York State government and the differences between the state government and the other levels of government, eg, national and local. On Monday, the students had a tour of the state Capitol and heard about whose faces are on those engraved stones and the secret of the fireplaces in the Senate Chambers. League Legislative Director, Barbara Bartolletti, then provided them with the do's and don'ts of lobbying the legislators – how to approach them, make your arguments and be persuasive. Assemblymembers Pat Fahy and James Tedisco then joined the group to allow all students to role play. Students were able to approach the legislators and lobby them on an issue of the student's choice. The legislators were wonderful to engage with the students in this activity.

In the afternoon, the students visited their Assemblymember's offices and shadowed their legislator. All of the students were escorted onto the Assembly and introduced before the Chambers. They viewed the legislators at their desks and the Chamber in session. The Assembly adjourned early but Assemblymember Peter Lopez graciously agreed to meet with the students to answer questions and discuss the procedures of the Chambers. The Assemblymember also allowed the students to do a short mock session in the Chambers. All students agreed that the process was more difficult than they expected.

After dinner, Casey Seiler, Capital Bureau Chief for the Times Union, and Karen DeWitt, Capital Bureau Chief for NY Public Radio, discussed the role of the media in covering and influencing public policy decisions. They agreed that with social media, the different segments of the media, e.g. radio versus print, are not all that different anymore. They also discussed the speed of media coverage now with social media but the constant need to confirm sources and information.

On Tuesday, the students learned about FOIA and how to access information in their communities and throughout the government from Robert Freeman, Executive Director of the Commission on Open Government. Robyn Ringle, Capital District Leader of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, also talk with the students about the role of an individual in making change happen; she used her experience in the issue of gun control to emphasize the influence of letters to the editors, to legislators and in community forums.

On the way back to the Capitol, the students had a tour of the Chambers of the Court of Appeals and heard about the different levels of the judiciary in New York State from Gary Spencer, Information Officer at the Court of Appeals.

If you know a student who would enjoy and benefit from the 2014 Student in Albany program please refer him or her to the information on the lwvcc.org website. You might even print out some information for the student.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CORTLAND COUNTY 2011-2012 BOARD:

Officers:

Co-Presidents (acting)	Charlotte Farris <i>farrisd@yaho.com</i> 756-7284
1st Vice President	Mary Beilby <i>mary.beilby@gmail.com</i>
2nd Vice President	Norma Rhodes
Secretary/public contact:	open
Treasurer:	Lenore Schwager <i>Lenore_Schwager@yahoo.com</i>

Newsletter/website/Advocacy **Mary Beilby** *mary.beilby@gmail.com*

At-large Directors:

Anita Wright	Anne Doyle (membership) 753-0830
Jane Richards	Linda Frank (voter services)
Sally Kammerling	Shelley Ingraham

LWV of Cortland Co website www.lwvcortland.org — **Facebook: lwvcc**

LWV NYS website www.lwvny.org

LWV US website www.lwv.org

The State Board Report and State Voter are published six times a year on the state website and provides vital information on all activities and actions of the NYS League.