

# TheVOTER

**Everybody counts! Let's count everybody!**

*How we can support efforts to ensure that everybody is counted?*

## Census 2020



The LWV-RMA and Rochester-Monroe County Complete Count Committee invite you to join us to learn how you can help ENSURE THAT EVERY MONROE COUNTY RESIDENT IS COUNTED in the 2020 Census.

September 23, 2019

7:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.

Asbury First Methodist Church, Gathering Room  
1050 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607

Accessible Parking & Building Access in the Rear

Preregister at [www.lwv-rma.org](http://www.lwv-rma.org) or 262-3730. Don't miss this!



**SPREAD THE WORD**



**Details on Page 3**

## Leadership Corner

On July 16th, the newly elected Board of Directors shared a meal together to celebrate the start of another active and engaging year. With a seemingly endless array of opportunities to impact our community, focus was our goal. More specifically, where do we direct our scarce resources, how do we leverage the talents of our members, how do we get the membership excited to take on new ventures, and where do we think we can make the most impact in furthering our mission?

Our goals for the coming year will sound familiar but we are shifting the focus into new areas while maintaining the core programs (e.g., Voter Registration at city events, schools, universities and naturalization ceremonies; Community Education Forums; Candidate Forums/ Debates; Vote411; Students Inside Albany; plus all the various support activities supporting our membership including communications, The Voter, finance, membership, etc...). Our goals will focus on expanding our efforts as described below:

### Our Goals are:

#### ADVOCACY

- Aligning community education forums with a state or national program priority or issue of public policy concern in the Rochester Metropolitan area
- Developing an “ask” at educational forums that translates the topic discussed into an action of either engagement (e.g., join an organization or committee) or advocacy (e.g., join a rally or send a letter to your senator)
- Increasing messages and opportunities for advocacy through The Voter and at League events (e.g., First Friday)

#### VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION (GET OUT THE VOTE)

- Continued development of our new initiatives: Text Messaging; Postcard Program; How to Vote Video; Creation of a Civics 101 Blog
- Continuing to explore new collaborations with community organizations such as: Black sorority alumni groups, Neighborhood Associations
- University of Rochester/LWV-RMA Collaboration for “Designing a Movement” Course

#### LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

- Increasing veteran and new member involvement in League activities by building relationships and developing a skills profile that enables members to be connected to their areas of interest
- Scheduling small meet and greet coffee hours to connect faces to names and to build relationships with members

All our work will consider diversity, equity, and inclusion – continuing to build relationships among various age, ability, ethnic, gender, racial, and socio-economic groups.

What excites you and motivates you? How do you see yourself participating in the League of Women Voters?

- Do you like being a part of rallies or would you like to learn how to advocate for topics where you have a passion? WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU.
- Do you want to be a part of voter registration events or efforts to get out the vote? WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU.
- Would you like to be a part of organizing a candidate forum or working with candidate feedback through Vote411? WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU.
- Would you like to organize community education forums? WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU.
- Would you like to learn more about the operation of the league, or be a part of setting its direction? WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU.

Contact either of us. We would love to discuss your interests and help you find YOUR PASSION in the organization. You will find friendship in the League and feel a great sense of accomplishment as you make a positive impact on our community.

Welcome to the 2019-2020 program year!

In League, your Co-Presidents

Kimberly Byers, [lwv.roc.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:lwv.roc.volunteer@gmail.com)  
585 247 4958

Judy Sternberg, [jsternberg3b@gmail.com](mailto:jsternberg3b@gmail.com)  
585 683 7690.

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**Everybody counts! Let's count everybody!**

*How we can support efforts to ensure that everybody is counted?*

**Census 2020**



## Census 2020: How can we support efforts to ensure that everybody is counted?

Please join us on September 23, 2019 to learn how you can help ensure that every Monroe County resident is counted in the 2020 Census.

The LWV-RMA is actively involved with the Rochester Monroe County Complete Count Committee which is reaching out to underrepresented communities to ensure that EVERYONE IS COUNTED in 2020. The League invites you to a community forum on how we can help to ensure that EVERYONE IS COUNTED in 2020.

**September 23, 2019  
7:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.**

**Asbury Methodist Church, Gathering Room  
1050 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607**

US Census data provides the basis for the distribution of \$675 billion of federal funds to support:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), including Pass-Through
- Special Education program funding
- Community infrastructure

Census data is used to redistribute and apportion Congressional seats. Businesses also utilize Census data to decide where to locate, creating factories, offices, and stores. The forum will also address efforts to include citizenship question(s) on Census 2020. Check out [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov) if you're interested in becoming a Census enumerator.

Get involved! Join us to see how YOU can make a difference.

Program facilitator:  
**Ann Carmody** [ann.carmody2012@gmail.com](mailto:ann.carmody2012@gmail.com)



## Court Simplification

LWV-RMA was asked to join the Court Simplification Coalition last year and add its support for a campaign led by Modern Courts, a statewide court reform organization committed to improving the judicial system for all New Yorkers ([www.moderncourts.org](http://www.moderncourts.org)). LWVNY convention delegate Kim Byers shares information about this topic on page 11.

Come to our October Educational Forum and learn:

- WHY court simplification is important
- HOW it can be achieved and how the League can help
- WHO benefits

**October 21, 2019  
Asbury Methodist Church  
1050 East Avenue  
7:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.**

More information to follow.

If you have experience with NY's court system and would like to help with this event, please contact **Kim Byers** at [lww.roc.volunteers@gmail.com](mailto:lww.roc.volunteers@gmail.com) or **Ann Carmody** at [ann.carmody2012@gmail.com](mailto:ann.carmody2012@gmail.com)

**The League hopes to include an advocacy component in each of its educational forums this year.**



## Update on Governmental Actions on Topics of LWV Interest

### THE LWV CAN CELEBRATE ADVANCES IN NEW YORK STATE

The New York State government approved legislation supporting LWV positions in a number of areas this past session, including the following:

- **Voting reforms**, including early voting. Starting this fall, each county will be required to open some polling places nine days prior to an election. Lawmakers also approved setting the state's primary day in June to coincide with the federal primary election date.
- **Equal pay for equal work**. Public employers must pay their workers equally if they perform "substantially similar work, regardless of gender.
- In addition, new laws **prohibit employers from asking for the salary history** of job applicants to set pay rates.
- **Cash bail**. State Lawmakers ended cash bail for most crimes as part of a host of criminal justice reforms that also included speeding up trials and helping parolees get jobs.
- **LLC loophole**. LLC campaign contributions will now be limited to \$5,000, and LLCs will need to better disclose the source of their funding.
- **Climate change**. The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act will install some of the nation's most ambitious goals to combat climate change, requiring the state to cut 85% of its greenhouse-gas emissions (from 1990 levels) by 2050 and approve green projects that offset the other 15%.
- **Gun control**. The state legislature passed new laws allowing police, family members and school officials to seek court orders to remove guns from a person deemed a harm to themselves or others. Teachers, meanwhile, are legally prohibited from carrying guns in schools.
- **DREAM Act**. The DREAM Act allows foreign-born children of undocumented immigrants to apply for New York's tuition assistance, including TAP and the Excelsior Scholarship, if they attended high school in our state and are in the process of applying for citizenship.
- **Expansion of abortion protections**. Lawmakers strengthened abortion protections by installing Roe v. Wade rights into state law, removing penalties from the state penal code, and including abortion rights within the Reproductive Health Act.
- **Protections for renters**. Lawmakers made New York City's rent-stabilization law permanent and

expanded it statewide. The law allows governmental entities across the state to establish boards to limit annual rent increases for tenants living in most multi-unit apartment buildings built before 1974.

- **Sexual harassment, rape law changes**. Lawmakers expanded the state's anti-harassment laws, removing a standard that protected employers unless the conduct was "severe or pervasive", and lengthening the statute of limitations for second- and third-degree rape.
- **Child Victims Act**. The Child Victims Act relaxed the state's strict statute of limitations on sexual crimes against children and will soon open up a one-year window to revive past claims of any age.
- **LGBTQ rights**. New York passed several laws to protect members of the LGBTQ community. One will end the "gay panic" defense (where defendants could claim that an attack on a person was induced by fear of a person's sexual orientation). State lawmakers also passed GENDA, which adds gender identity and expression to New York's anti-discrimination laws. Another law prohibits mental health professionals from engaging in sexual orientation 'conversion' efforts.
- **Drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants**. The Legislature voted to allow undocumented immigrants to apply for drivers' licenses by using valid foreign documents like passports to prove their identity and age instead of a Social Security Number.

### WORK STILL NEEDED IN NEW YORK STATE

During the just-completed legislative session in New York, the LWV also sought -

- Automatic voter registration,
- Restoration of voting rights for parolees,
- Campaign finance reforms,
- Public financing of elections,
- Oversight of new Commission on Campaign Finance Reform,
- An ERA amendment in the state constitution.

*The League's work will continue, and your support will help to keep up the demands on our legislators and communicate our work to the public and members. Working together we can help to shape New York State into a beacon of strong democracy. Thank you for your support of our advocacy.*

### RESOURCES:

League of Women Voters New York State.

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, June 21, 2019:

<https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/politics/albany/2019/06/21/20-major-laws-passed-new-york-state-capitol-year-marijuana-abortion-guns-licenses/1522933001/>

*continued on next page*

## Update on Governmental Actions on Topics of LWV Interest

*continued from page 4*

### U.S. SUPREME COURT RULES FOR AND AGAINST LWV POSITIONS

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled to block, for now, a question on the 2020 census asking whether respondents are U.S. citizens. However, President Trump has directed the federal Commerce Department to collect the information by other methods.

The Supreme Court also ruled that federal courts do not have a role to play in deciding whether partisan gerrymandering goes too far since there is no fair test for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering has gone too far.

The LWV seeks to establish independent, citizen-led redistricting commissions at the state level to draw electoral districts. Redistricting commissions—like those approved in Colorado, Michigan, and Utah in 2018—have been highly successful in ensuring that district maps fairly represent the population. Establishment of fair redistricting standards is part of the For the People Act, which the League helped to shape earlier this year. This legislation has already passed in the U.S. House of Representatives, but it needs more support in the Senate. Learn more about the LWVUS campaign to promote this bill in the U.S. Senate on page 6.

In 2014, NYS voters passed a constitutional amendment to create a ten-member redistricting commission to draw both state and congressional district lines starting with the 2020 census. It is not yet known how successful it will be in drawing fair lines.

### Common Cause: Our Democracy 2020 Survey

In June, Common Cause sent every presidential candidate its Our Democracy 2020 survey -- asking what actions they are prepared to take to ensure that our democracy represents each of us.

As of this writing, responses have been received from 6 presidential candidates -- Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg, Cory Booker, Marianne Williamson, and Steve Bullock. To read their responses, formatted to allow comparisons, go to <https://ourdemocracy2020.org/>.

Common Cause also requests that voters contact candidates who have yet to respond, encouraging them to participate—since the most effective way to get candidates to go on the record is hearing from voters.



LWVNYS is utilizing Vote411, the LWV voter information website, again this year. Vote411 provides information on candidates and issues in a user-friendly format. After entering an address, a voter can view all the offices that will appear on his ballot with information for each candidate.

Thanks to the expanded Vote 411 committee, LWV-RMA was able to get more candidates to post their responses to our questions than ever before. Of the 106 primary candidates in Monroe County, 57 posted information. Since many of these candidates had "Opportunity to Ballot" as their only opponent, the participation rate of candidates with named opponents was much greater.

After the primary election, the candidate information was removed from Vote411. We are now getting ready for the general election, and shortly after the Board of Elections posts the list of general election candidates, we will publish the names of all candidates on Vote411 with information posted by the candidates.

We will let you know as soon as Vote411 is live. Please check out your ballot and note which of your candidates have responded. When you see candidates or their representatives, either thank them for posting or ask why they haven't.

Many thanks to the committee members for their assistance – Christine Booth, Julie Damerell, Renee Frazier, Deborah Gordon, Judy Hartmann, Myra Pelz, Chris Pryor, and Gail Wilder.

**Judy Weinstein,**  
Vote411 Chair [j.weinstein.roc@gmail.com](mailto:j.weinstein.roc@gmail.com)



# LWVUS Postcard Campaign: Support of the *For the People Act*

In March, the House of Representatives passed the For the People Act and it was introduced in the Senate. This bill comprises a transformative set of reforms to strengthen our democracy by making our election system more free, fair, and accessible to all eligible Americans. The League of Women Voters, within the Declaration for American Democracy coalition, has worked to influence the language of this bill. While the LWVUS supports the legislation, there are parts of it that the League will not promote or work to advance.

Why the LWVUS supports the For the People Act:

- It improves access to voting with reforms like Same Day Registration and Automatic Voter Registration.
- It requires independent redistricting commissions.
- It ends voter roll purges based on failure to vote.
- It restores the Voting Rights Act.
- It includes provisions to strengthen campaign finance transparency and government ethics enforcement.

The LWVUS is encouraged by the extraordinary and comprehensive reforms in the For the People Act that are good for all Americans and deserve bipartisan support. It therefore is seeking support from its members and supporters to encourage the U.S. Senate to consider this legislation

## Please send a postcard to our U.S. Senators.

POSTCARD CAMPAIGN to support the *For the People Act*:

The LWVUS is asking members and supporters to contact their federal senators via POSTCARD:

- Stating that the *For the People Act* makes elections fairer and therefore deserves support from all members of Congress;
- Seeking U.S. Senate hearings on the *For the People Act*;
- Signing the postcard and indicating New York State hometown.

LWVUS has suggested the following message to the senator, but your own wording would be more effective:

WE THE PEOPLE demand a hearing on the FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

The *For the People Act*, a sweeping democracy reform bill, passed the U.S. House of Representatives on March 8, 2019. We call on the U.S. Senate to hold a hearing on this bill because the American people deserve a transparent democracy.

Address the postcards as follows:

**The Hon. Charles Schumer, Member, U.S. Senate**

322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**The Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand, Member, U.S. Senate**

478 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20519

SEND A POSTCARD

PLACE STAMP HERE

**Make Yourself Heard**

Support the  
HR-approved  
For the  
People Act.

The Honorable  
U.S. Senator  
from NYS

FROM: Your Name  
Your NY Hometown



## Voter Services

This fresh League year marks a transition time for Voter Services. Gin Busack, our much-loved, energy-plus Chair, has stepped down after four labor-intensive years marked by accomplishments in every direction—in organization, coordination, scope of activities, leadership development and community partnering. Gin also organized and nurtured our new Get Out The Vote (GOTV) group last year.

As no one person could fill Gin's shoes, Voter Services is now operating under a new decentralized model. Under this model there are continuing leaders: Sheila Abeling, Chair of Naturalizations; Gail Wilder, Coordinator and Liaison for college campus activities; and Ida Holloran, Liaison to the Latino community. New leaders are: Barbara Grosh, Coordinator for GOTV; Deb Leary, Liaison to the Monroe County Library System; and Judy Sternberg, Acting Coordinator for City events and all other Voter Services areas.

With the June Primaries behind us, July was a time for evaluation of our new trial neighborhood canvassing and text messaging service. We saw the benefit of talking to residents in their neighborhoods and learning about their situations and barriers to voter participation, but more ground work is needed to build the partnerships necessary for the success of this labor-intensive approach. So for now, LWV-RMA-led canvassing has been placed on hold. Text messaging, however, is promising and will get more focused attention in the build-up to the General Election.

July and August brought voter registration collaborations with Delta Sigma Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha and members of Indivisible. Check the voter registration events that come via your email to see all our past and upcoming events and to sign up. College campus events start in August and will continue into September. And in September please plan to join the League for the 9/14 annual Suffragist City Parade (see *highlighted box on page 10 for details*) and for National Voter Registration Day events on September 24, tentatively at the Maplewood Library and Monroe Community College.

Other exciting new projects include a video Public Service Announcement (PSA) and our work with UofR on a course "Designing a Movement" that uses LWV-RMA as its Community Partner.

Thanks to our wonderful members and friends who volunteer their energy, time, heart and ideas to the achievement of our mission and goals. Thanks to Sheila Abeling, Carol Aragon, Barbara Boyd, Holly Brookstein, Joan Buckley, Gin Busack, Kim Byers, Anne Carmody, Sally Combs, Julie Damerell, Tanya Davis, Karen Evans, Beth Feldman, Margaret Foo, Renee Frazier, Deborah Gordon, Anne Gray, Barbara Grosh, Donna Harris, Judy Hartmann, Ida Holloran, Kathleen Mock, Marion O'Connor, Suzanne Olson, Myra Pelz, Judy Plum, Dawn Pruszyński, Elaine Schmidt, Bertha Simpkins, Katherine Smith, Margaret Supinski, Phyllis Vincelli, Elaine Walker, Dorcet Watson, Susan Weinberg, and Gail Wilder.

**Judy Sternberg**, [jsternberg3b@gmail.com](mailto:jsternberg3b@gmail.com)



TOP ROW: LWV-RMA and Delta Sigma Theta members at Roc the Peace Festival. Judy Sternberg, Karen Evans, Tanya Davis, Renee Frazier, Bertha Simpkins and a voter registrant.

BOTTOM ROW: Judy Sternberg and Gail Wilder with a voter registrant at a Community Breakfast. Marion O'Connor and Kathy Mock at Jordan Health Front Porch Festival, signing up an attendee for a lawn sign.

## LWV-RMA Sponsors Primary Forums for Rochester Council Candidates

LWV-RMA co-sponsored two well-attended Candidate Forums before the June primary election for candidates in the Democratic primary for the Rochester City Council (no other party held a primary for City Council).

The first forum involved candidates for the City Council East District, and was co-sponsored with the Browncroft Neighborhood Association, the North Winton Village Neighborhood Association and the Park-Meigs Neighborhood Association. The audience included an estimated 70 to 100 people.

The second forum was for the City Council South District, co-sponsored with the South Wedge Planning Committee, and was attended by about 50 residents. Shirley Thompson, former Rochester City School District Commissioner, moderated both forums.

We are currently in the process of planning forums to be held prior to the October 26 start of Early Voting for the general election. Details will be shared with members once the plans are complete.

**Judy Weinstein**, [j.weinstein.roc@gmail.com](mailto:j.weinstein.roc@gmail.com)



Participants in the debate for the City Council East primary candidates: Moderator Shirley Thompson and Candidates Wayne Harris, Bryce Miller, Michael Geraci, Stanley Martin, and Mary Lupien.

## Sunshine Corner

**MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE,  
JULY 9 OBSERVED BY ELAINE  
SCHMIDT**



During the Public Forum, speakers asked for the repeal of the Women's Reproductive Health Act, the repeal of the law allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license, a Climate Action Plan for Monroe County, and a wage increase for early prevention workers. Larry Marx of The Children's Agenda thanked the Legislature for changing the income eligibility level for various county services from 35% above the poverty level to 25% above the poverty level.

Hillary Olson of the Rochester Museum and Science Center and Steve Hausmann of the Entercom Marketing Results Group were appointed to the Board of Directors of the Greater Rochester Visitors Association, Inc.

The following people were appointed to Monroe County Recycling Advisory Committee: Todd Lewis of Wilbert's Premium Recycled Parts, Ram Shrivastava of Larsen Engineers, Eric Longnecker of Diamond Packaging, Nathan Boor of Foodlink, Dennis Zink, Jason Wadsworth of Wegmans Food Market, Enid Cardinal and Thomas Belknap of City of Rochester Operations Center.

The Legislature voted along party lines (17-10) to authorize commencement of litigation against the State of New York and other necessary parties to challenge the lawfulness of the "Drivers License Access and Privacy Act." Several Democratic legislators questioned the reason to initiate litigation when there is already litigation challenging the law and asked questions regarding the cost to the County to pursue this litigation. The Legislature was called into Executive Session regarding the proposed litigation and, as a result, details were not shared with the public.

(To view the full minutes from this and other meetings, please click here: <http://www2.monroecounty.gov>)

**Elaine Schmidt**, [e.schmidt8@frontier.com](mailto:e.schmidt8@frontier.com)

## LWV-RMA Annual Dues

Dues notices will be going out soon to members who joined prior to February 2019 (Life members excluded). Due date is October 1, 2019. Please check your email in September for a renewal notice. The email will be sent from [communications@lwv-rma.org](mailto:communications@lwv-rma.org).

Membership levels:

Individual Membership	\$75.00
Household Membership	\$105.00
Susan B. Anthony/ Frederick Douglass Membership	\$150.00
Carrie Chapman Catt Membership	\$200.00

Student Memberships are now FREE!

(Please suggest to young people you know who are interested in current issues that they join to become better informed and to make their voices heard.)

Thank you for your support!

**Mary Garfield**, [Membership@lwv-rma.org](mailto:Membership@lwv-rma.org)

## Gin Busack Honored by Rochester Federation of Women's Clubs

At the June 13 meeting of the Rochester Federation of Women's Clubs, LWV-RMA leader Gin Busack was presented with a Certificate of Achievement for her outstanding contribution to the community, in recognition of her leadership of the LWV-RMA and, in particular, its voter registration initiative. LWV-RMA Co-President Kim Byers explained why Gin was nominated, and LWV-RMA member Barbara Kay accepted the award for Gin and read Gin's acceptance statement. Gin was unable to attend due to travel commitments.



*LWV-RMA Member Barbara Kay reading Gin Busack's acceptance speech, and Dorothy Borgus, RFWC Treasurer and LWV-RMA Member.*



## Naturalization Report

### NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES:

Our League volunteers were busy in June and July. Mimi Wilson attended the June 6 ceremony led by the Hon. William Taylor at the Monroe County Office Building, where she met 50 new citizens.

On Flag Day two naturalization ceremonies were held. The 10:00 A.M. ceremony was at the Federal Building with Sheila Abeling volunteering. Judge Frank Paul Geraci held court for the 53 new citizens. At 12:45 P.M. on the same day, June 14, Margaret Supinski greeted 20 candidates for naturalization at Florence Brasser Elementary School in the Gates Chili School District, a new venue for naturalization ceremonies. The school was filled with students who were able to observe the ceremony. Judges James Walsh and Charles Siragusa presided.

On June 25 at the Rochester City Hall, 49 candidates recited the oath for naturalization in Judge David Larimer's court. Julie Damerell helped new citizens register to vote.

On July 4, 40 new citizens were naturalized at the Genesee Country Museum by the Hon. Frank Paul Geraci. Margaret Supinski welcomed the new citizens.

Judge Jonathan Feldman held court for the naturalization ceremony on July 24 at Rochester City Hall. Julie Damerell greeted 41 candidates.

On July 25, Marcia Eisenberg and JoAnn Kane Demott met 31 candidates for naturalization. Judge James Piampiano held court at the Monroe County Office Building.

**Sheila Abeling**, [sheiler162007@gmail.com](mailto:sheiler162007@gmail.com)

## Information For the General Election

**October 29:** Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot.

**November 4:** Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.

**November 4:** Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local board of elections no later than Nov. 13th. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 19th.

**November 5:** Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter).

## FAIR ELECTION PRACTICES CAMPAIGN (FEPC) SIGNING CEREMONY

The FEPC Pledge Signing and Press Conference for the 2019 general election is scheduled for Thursday, September 12th, at noon in the Atrium of the Monroe County Office Building.

Candidates will be recognized for signing the pledge to conduct an issue-oriented and civil campaign.

Everyone is invited to attend this event.



TOP LEFT & CENTER: Scenes from the June 14 ceremony at Florence Brasser School, led by the Hon. Charles Siragusa and the Hon. James Walsh, as well as some of the students who attended the ceremony. TOP RIGHT & BOTTOM: Scenes from the June 14 naturalization ceremony led by the Hon. Frank Paul Geraci, Sr.



*We the People...  
& Equality for All People!*

Saturday, September 14, 2019 at 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Parade starts @10:00 A.M.

Line-up starts @9:00 A.M.

West Main Street to the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House,  
17 Madison Street, Rochester, NY

Parade line-up begins at the parking lot at the corner of West Broad Street and  
Plymouth Avenue North across from the Rochester City School District Central Office.  
Step-off from the staging site is 10:00 A.M.

- Arrive at the Susan B. Anthony Square Park at 10:45 A.M.
- Hear about RMSC project: 40 most inspiring local women who were firsts in their fields.
- Learn about The Art Force 5 community art project.

Learn more at <https://susanb.org/Suffragist-City-Parade/index.html>

Sponsored by the Susan B. Anthony Museum & House

## Congressman Morelle Hosts Gun Control Meeting

All of the 150 seats available in the Irondequoit Library were filled on July 28 for a town hall meeting about gun violence. Members of gun groups AND supporters of gun control were obviously present in the audience. HR member Joseph Morelle presented an overview of nine bills that are proposed in the House of Representatives. Those with questions or comments filled out a form and these written comments were read to the audience. Rep. Morelle responded to all of the concerns raised and elaborated on the proposals. Participants from both sides of the gun control issue attended.

Elaine Schmidt, [e.schmidt8@frontier.com](mailto:e.schmidt8@frontier.com)



Congressman Joseph Morelle leading his town hall meeting on gun control.



## Ruminations on the New York State Convention

**Kim Byers** (one of your voting delegates)

How do I summarize my experience at the New York State Convention of the League of Women Voters? Looking back, I would say: take a deep breath and open your mind; get ready to learn; and be amazed at the talent of the members who work for democracy and represent this League across the state. Much credit is due to the State League for organizing this immersing event that tapped the many topics that individual Leagues are wrestling to address. The one criticism of the event that I would offer: There was insufficient time to mingle and meet with members of the different groups represented. That said, I believe each of the Rochester delegates was able to make a few connections based on the workshops they attended. Highlights of the Workshops and Key Messages follow.



### PROPOSED BUDGET PASSES: DUES INCREASE TO LWNYS

For those who attended our Annual Meeting on June 6 at Locust Hill, the point was raised that the LWNYS was proposing an increase in dues of \$3 per member. This proposal came with the convention material but was not known at the time the LWV-RMA budget for 2019-2020 was published in The Voter (May edition). After discussion, including concerns raised that this proposal was not timely communicated to local leagues, the budget passed. The impact to the LWV-RMA budget will be approximately \$300. The NY State budget is stretched and, as such, the position of Legislative Director (Jennifer Wilson's previous position) will not be filled. Existing members of the State League will double-hat to fill the business needs of this role.

A fund-raising event is planned for November 9 at the Buffalo History Museum. Mary Hussong-Kallen is assisting with the planning for this event and several Board members will be attending the event. YOU are invited to attend as well. More information will come your way over the next few months. Hold the Date: NOVEMBER 9. It should be a fun time with an opportunity to meet the new NY State League President as well as socialize with members from the Buffalo League.

### 2019-2021 PRESIDENT AND NY STATE BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

The slate of candidates for the Board of Directors of the New York State league were elected without opposition. **Suzanne Stassevitch** (LWV of NYC) is the new President. Officers include:

**Judie Gorenstein** (LWV of Rivertowns): *1st Vice President / Voter Services*

**Sally Robinson** (LWV of NYC): *2nd Vice President / Issues & Advocacy*

**Regina Tillman** (LWV of Albany County): *3rd Vice President*

**Jen Clark** (LWV of Mid-Hudson Region): *Secretary*

**Lori Robinson** (LWV of Buffalo/Niagara): *Treasurer*

The biographies for each of the officers as well as the directors can be found on the league website in the "2019 Pre-Convention Kit" document.

### ALL PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LWNYS BYLAWS PASSED

In my estimation, most of the bylaws amendments focused on clarifying existing rules and procedures. Details of the amendments can be found on the NY State League website in the "2019 Pre-Convention Kit" document.

### WORKSHOP: COURT SIMPLIFICATION

After a request from LWNYS, the LWV-RMA joined the Court Simplification Coalition voicing our local support for a campaign led by Modern Courts, a statewide court reform organization committed to improving the judicial system for all New Yorkers (see [www.moderncourts.org](http://www.moderncourts.org) for more information). Those who are not lawyers or who have not had much experience with the court system might be surprised to learn of the complexity embedded in our state's court structure. There are 11 trial courts and 4 appellate divisions, each specialized and partitioned so that hearings must be single threaded to specific courts, regardless of backlog and workload. A diagram of the court structure looks to lay people like "a spaghetti chart." This is especially true when compared to the court system structure of states like New Jersey and California, both of which have a simple, three-tier court system with judges having the flexibility to preside over a broader scope of hearings and for the overall system to balance the workload across the court system. For citizens this means lower costs and more timely adjudication of their cases.

The overwork and backlogs in certain courts are tied to the economics of the litigants. According to New York Community Trust Newsletter, "So-called 'poor people's courts'—Family Court, Criminal Court, and the housing part of Civil Court—serve mostly black and Latino and low-income litigants. Compared with other trial courts that deal with corporations and wealthier litigants, these venues are underfunded and overcrowded." Court simplification is intended to address this issue in two ways:

- Ease difficulty experienced by children and families in family-related litigation while providing greater fairness and consistency of results;
- Consolidate the State's lower courts and expand their powers, enabling them to better serve local communities.

So what makes it so difficult to reform the court? One form of resistance comes from those currently working in the system. There is a perception that simplification elevates the positions of some judges while diminishing the position of others. When there are perceived winners and losers in an organization, there is politics at play.

The coalition for Court Simplification is looking for our support in several ways:

- Grow the coalition through LWV-RMA contacts with other partner organizations
- Gather client stories that highlight the inequities of the current system
- Host educational events
- Advocate for reform with our legislature.



## Ruminations on the New York State Convention

*continued from previous page*

To initiate our action in this topical category, we are planning to host a community forum on Court Simplification. If you have experience in this area and would like to help to organize speakers and partners for this educational event, please reach out to Kim Byers ([lww.roc.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:lww.roc.volunteer@gmail.com)) or to Ann Carmody ([ann.carmody2012@gmail.com](mailto:ann.carmody2012@gmail.com)). To learn more on this topic, please reference the "Court Simplification Overview" presentation from the NY State convention at <https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/state-conventions-council> or visit the Modern Court website at [www.moderncourts.org](http://www.moderncourts.org).

### WORKSHOP: LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

It was a pleasure to see Jennifer Wilson (our past LWVNYS Legislative Director) lead the discussion on Lobbying and Advocacy. For many who are long-time members of the League of Women Voters, this topic is well understood. But for the many members who lack advocacy or lobbying experience, this workshop offered some good tips:

1. The key to lobbying is "who" to lobby. For example, the Rules Committee deals with changes to existing laws while the Ways and Means Committee deals with money-related matters. Researching the various committees to determine the appropriate party to focus efforts is well worth the time.
2. When meeting with a legislator, a focused message and effective use of time is key. Consider the following:
  - a. Be prepared: what is your message, what is your ask, what is your response to expected questions
  - b. Leave something behind: literature, a letter of support, your contact information
  - c. Have someone take notes and keep time.

## League of Women Voters NYS Convention 2019

**Deb Leary, Delegate**

Thanks to our League, I had the opportunity to attend the LWV NYS Convention including two workshops. The first workshop that I attended was Social Media, Websites and Other Technology. The presenters suggested that we only use what we can easily manage to keep fresh and up-to-date. The goal should be to post every day. Facebook was suggested because it's easy to share posts, giving more exposure. Instagram was suggested as a platform for advocacy. The other option covered was MyLO, the web platform developed in California and now used by about 100 League units around the country. Those attending the workshop who were familiar with it, really liked it. The cost is \$400 per year, with a \$200 setup fee. A bonus is telephone support that is provided with the subscription.



The second workshop I attended was Youth Programs of Local Leagues. The first presenter, from Huntington, discussed that group's Vote 13 programs in the local middle schools – getting kids started early learning the importance of civic engagement. They also have organized a Youth Engaging Youth program partnering with their public library. They identified groups of activist kids in the schools and community, and

invited their leaders to present to other kids on the topic of "Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport."

The second presenter was from North Country, where the League organized a Civics Day program in partnership with their local Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The participating high schools are far apart, but the BOCES provided transportation to a central location. Contacts with Social Studies/Government teachers were used to choose three students from each school. Culinary Arts students provided food for the day. Local legislators were invited to do a brief introduction of themselves, and eat lunch with the kids, where they moved from table to table to interact with students. Legislators loved this format!

The last presenter, from the Hamptons, described her League's Running and Winning program for girls who are interested in running for office. Junior high and high school girls had the opportunity to meet elected officials, including judges. The all-day event started with breakfast where tables of five girls were assigned a campaign issue/topic to work on. Each of the five chose one of the following roles: candidate, speech writer, fundraiser, communications director, and campaign manager. There was also a League facilitator at each table. Elected officials moved from table to table in pairs to answer questions and give advice as the girls worked through their issues and planned a campaign.

The Hamptons presenter also mentioned Celebrity Voter Registration. One of their members had a connection with the World Wrestling Federation and one of the wrestlers came in costume to walk the beaches and help to register voters. Having a celebrity really brought people in and made for a very successful registration event!

## Impressions and Takeaways from LWVNYS 2019 Biennial Convention

**Judy Sternberg, Delegate**

I can now proudly say that I am a League of Women Voters convention veteran! – having been last year to my first national convention and this year to my first state convention. State convention, similar to national, is a jam-packed-time of taking care of business and adopting our State Program for 2019-2021 (plenary sessions); meeting many impressive League leaders and activists from around the state; sharing goals, ideas and experiences (workshops, trainings, caucuses, and networking); getting to know our great LWV-RMA delegates better; and being inspired by all of the above plus some powerful guest speakers.

Most valuable for me were the inspiration, tips, and lessons learned in the areas of Civics Education & Engagement of Youth, and from various Get Out The Vote programs around the state. Most awesome was the moment LWV-RMA was recognized and honored for our work and accomplishments with LWVNYS's Carrie Chapman Catt Award (we had not been previously notified of our selection).

Convention is so full it is both exciting and exhausting, but in the end, it charges one's batteries to return reinvigorated for the work and mission of the League. In these times when our nation seems to be facing unprecedented challenges to our institutions and democracy, we are not standing by, we are doing something!



## Report on LWVNYS Convention, June 2019

**Gail Wilder, Delegate**

One experiences a jam-packed weekend when attending The LWVNYS Convention. Between registration and the final plenary session are a variety of offerings: workshops, meals with speakers, plenary sessions, a tour of the Capitol, caucuses, and a chance to browse in the Sales and Exhibition room. In addition, this year there were two training sessions on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The group of five delegates from LWV-RMA did it all.



My first workshop was LWVNYS Policy on No Empty Chair facilitated by our own Judy Weinstein. There was a lively discussion with some helpful ideas. The general consensus was that the policy is a good one and helps us to remain non-partisan. However, many felt it favors the incumbents who chose not to attend knowing the other candidate will not have a chance to speak. Suggestions for this situation included-- Introduce the candidate who did attend, explain the policy on Empty Chair, end the forum, have the League members leave but invite the audience to remain and talk with the candidate who did show. -- Publicize ahead of time the candidates who were invited and those who accepted, those who declined or did not respond and explain the Empty Chair Policy.-- Pose the question -- Would you hire someone who did not show up for a job interview? -- Use letters to the Editor to explain the policy.---Film interviews of all candidates separately and then air them all the same night. There was a request for additional tools from National that might include a template for letters to the editor. A suggestion was made to change the name of the policy to No Single Candidate instead of No Empty Chair.

Since our local League had two events focused on the Census in Rochester there was not a lot of new material. The emphasis was on how important it is to count everyone so Federal dollars are distributed equitably and new legislative districts are created with the correct statistics. Mention was made that the Census Bureau is continually gathering data and creating enormous databases that are used all year for many significant research projects. A request was made to help inform the public about census job opportunities with salaries well above minimum wage ([www.census.gov/jobs](http://www.census.gov/jobs)), and partner organizations are being sought to help with educating the public ([www.census.gov/partners.html](http://www.census.gov/partners.html)). April 1, 2020 is Census Day.

Fact or Fake: Exploring the Role of Media in Politics. This workshop started with a challenge for each League to start community discussions with people from disparate political views. One approach in Westchester was to use grant monies to work with Social Justice attorneys, high school students and teachers to create Civics courses. In 2018 their Civics topic was Preparing for Midterm Elections, in 2019, Fact or Fiction: A Tool Kit for Examining the Media. The League trains people to teach these courses and they are offered in High Schools, libraries and other venues. The courses are very well done with PowerPoint and lots of media clips for discussion. They will share entire courses or provide a model to adapt for your own community. Future topics might include New Legislation on Elections in NYS, the Census, Get Out the Vote.

Election Laws. Judie Gorenstein presented complete coverage of the new legislation. Here are the highlights: early voting will start 10 days before the November 5 general election but will not include November 4; Federal and State Primaries will be combined and held on the 4th Tuesday in June; State-wide Voter Registration means your voting history will travel with you if you move within the State; the LLC loophole regarding campaign donations will be closed; 16- & 17-year-olds may register early but not vote until they are 18. Constitutional amendments are needed for two other provisions -- No Excuse Absentee Ballots and Same Day Voter Registration. Starting in November there will be Electronic Poll Books. Rochester will have seven sites for Early Voting. Information on location, parking, schedules, accessibility is available on line at the Board of Elections or LWNYS.

A panel provided very interesting new ideas on Voter Services. Cattaraugus created large posters with the heading "I Vote Because . . ." and took them to 20 high schools. The students wrote their comments and they were posted in a public area to be shared. The surface was erasable so they were used many times. Riverton League members don backpacks filled with voter registration forms and spend time walking in public venues. The logo on the backpack is a simple "I Vote." They also provide inexpensive string backpacks with voter registration forms for high schoolers celebrating birthdays. Syracuse used grant monies to meet weekly with neighborhood groups to survey voters and collect information on why they did or did not vote or why they felt their vote did not count. They found it was necessary to take along the slate or a sample ballot because people were uninformed. They also held a party close to the polling site for those who did vote. They found that childcare and transportation to the polls were not problems in getting out the vote. Schenectady used Board of Elections data to study voter turnout and then met with neighborhood associations to improve turnout. They worked with religious groups, put out lawn signs, articles in the newsletter, and posters in the library. They used electronic bulletin boards in high schools and announcements at sports events. This year they are asking all high school art teachers to use a GOTV theme for a poster competition. Long Island is producing a short audio clip with the GOTV message and distributing it to colleges, high schools, radio and TV stations, bus stations, concert venues and movie theaters. It's prepared in English and Spanish. They are requesting a public service announcement from the Governor. Albany shared ideas on how to introduce LWV to high school Principals and then trained members to do voter registration in the schools.

ONE PERSON  
CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE,  
AND EVERYONE  
SHOULD TRY.

-JOHN F. KENNEDY-



## LWVNYS Convention Report

**Judy Weinstein, Delegate**

I love LWV Conventions! We get to spend a few days discussing issues and League policy with impassioned and intelligent members from all parts of the state (or in the case of LWVUS Conventions, the entire country.) We may not all agree, but it's clear we all have the same goal – to help the League fulfill its mission of encouraging informed and active participation in government, working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy. I attended several workshops, two of which are described here.



I led the workshop on the LWVNYS' policy against holding "Empty Chair" debates. This policy means that LWVNYS and local leagues are prohibited from holding any kind of candidate event with only one candidate for a specific office present (e.g. County Legislature – District 21). After I suggested that a workshop on the policy be held at Convention, I was asked to lead the workshop. The workshop began with a brief discussion on the name of the policy. Attendees agreed "Empty chair" policy is a misnomer – if there is only one candidate on the ballot, then there is no empty chair when that unopposed candidate attends and if there are several candidates on the ballot, empty chairs would be permitted as long as two attend. We recommended to the board that the name of the policy be changed to "No single candidate event" or something similar and the board members at the workshop were in agreement.

We then moved on to the meatier discussion of the policy itself. Some attendees viewed the policy as giving an unfair advantage to incumbents and other strong candidates while others felt that the policy worked well for their leagues and they were successful in getting candidates to participate in their events. The experience of one local league was described. After it held a forum with only one candidate present, a photo appeared in the local papers with this single candidate sitting at a table with the League banner displayed. The photo gave the impression that the league supported this candidate. Nothing the league said could contradict that image. This story vividly demonstrated the need for the policy and the consensus of the workshop attendees was not to recommend a change in the policy.

The Proposed Program Planning and Bylaw Amendments workshop provided information about the exciting new program planning procedures adopted by the LWVNYS board, designed to speed up the study and concurrence process. Some bylaws changes were required to fully implement it.

In the past, local leagues held program planning meetings in January of LWVNYS Convention years (biannual) and made recommendations. Program was adopted at Convention – both positions and new studies. There was no way to propose new studies between Conventions, no matter how compelling.

The new plan continues the program planning meetings but also allows leagues and individual members to propose studies at any time, provided they meet certain criteria such as having a committee to do the study. If the board approves the new study, the study can begin immediately.

In the past, if your local league didn't participate in a LWVNYS

concurrence or consensus, you had no opportunity to voice your opinion. With the new procedures, if your local league isn't participating, you can get together with a group to discuss and send your report to state OR you can meet online with others. The responses from leagues will have more weight so as to encourage leagues to participate.

It will be interesting to see the effect of the new policy!

**VOTE like you  
understand that  
someone died  
for your right  
to do so**







# Coming Events!



## SEPTEMBER

- 6 First Friday, (11:00 A.M., I-Square, 400 Bakers Park)
- 10 LWV-RMA Board, (Noon – 2:00 P.M., Asbury UMC)
- 12 FEPC Pledge Signing (Noon, Monroe County Office)
- 14 Suffragist Parade, (10:00 AM – 1:00 PM Broad/Fitzhugh to S.B. Anthony Museum & House)
- 17 Naturalization, (1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. The College at Brockport)
- 23 Forum: Census 2020, Rochester Area Complete Count Committee, (7:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M., Asbury First UMC)
- 26 Naturalization (10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M., Monroe County Office)

## October

- 4 First Friday (11:00 A.M., I-Square, 400 Bakers Park)
- 8 LWV-RMA Board, (Noon – 2:00 P.M., Asbury UMC)
- 17 Naturalization (10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M., Monroe County Office Building)
- 21 Forum: Court Simplification (7:00 – 9:00 P.M., Asbury First UMC)
- 29 Naturalization, (1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M., Rochester City Hall)

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK!



We know you'll "like" us!

[www.facebook.com/lwvofrma](http://www.facebook.com/lwvofrma)

*Be sure to check your email and our website for other events as they are scheduled!*

## Don't Miss First Fridays with LWV-RMA

Join League colleagues for lunch or a mid-day coffee break each First Friday of the month, 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. at I-Square, 400 Bakers Park, at Titus Avenue, Irondequoit, NY 14617.

No need to RSVP. Pencil us in on your calendar and join when you can!

There's a place at the table for you!

September 6

October 4

November 1

December 6

January 3



Board of Directors meetings are held at Asbury First UMC. Board meetings are open to all members. See calendar for dates and times.

Advocacy/Government Committee meets monthly. For details, call Ann Carmody at (585) 748-5848.

Naturalization ceremonies are usually held on second Thursday of each month. Check League website for updated info each month.

Forums are open to the public. Calendar information is subject to change.

For more complete information, consult our website at [www.LWV-RMA.org](http://www.LWV-RMA.org), call 262-3730 or e-mail us at [info@lwv-rma.org](mailto:info@lwv-rma.org)

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Leadership Team

**Co-Presidents** Kim Byers (2019-2020) Judy Sternberg (2019-2021)

**Treasurer** Judy Weinstein (2019-2021)

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**Director** Myra Pelz (2019-2021)

**Director** Kris Rogers (2018-2020)

**Director** Gail Wilder (2018-2020)

## OCTOBER VOTER DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 15!

### League of Women Voters-Rochester Metro Area Mission Statement

*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.*

Voter education is one of the League's most important functions, and the League encourages all citizens to register and to cast an informed vote.

The League does not support political parties or candidates, but does take stands on important issues after careful study and research.

Membership in the League is open to all persons who are at least 16 years of age.

Those under 16 can be associate members.

### Goals of the League of Women Voters:

- To encourage informed citizen participation in government and politics
- To influence public policy through education and advocacy

## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Looking for info on a League committee or activity? Look no further!

**Advocacy/Government**, Ann Carmody

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*Layout/Design,  
Chris Burleigh*

## Join the League Today!



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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check payable to  
League of Women Voters/RMA to:

LWV-RMA

PO Box 10573

Rochester, NY 14610

or join us online at: [www.lwv-rma.org/join.php](http://www.lwv-rma.org/join.php)

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

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Household	..... \$105
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Carrie Chapman Catt	..... \$200
Student	..... FREE
Low income, call office at 262-3730	..... Sliding Scale
or send an email to: <a href="mailto:info@lwv-rma.org">info@lwv-rma.org</a>	