

# TheVOTER



*Webinar*

**Public  
Finance  
of State Elections  
in NY**

*Report on the first year  
of public finance of state elections  
in 2024 by Cheryl Couser, Co-Director,  
NYS Public Campaign Finance Board.*

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**1/22/2025  
7:00-8:00 pm  
Via Zoom**

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**See Page 3 for details**

## **A request from the Board to all LWV Members**

There is a "Talent and Interests" form on the LWV-RMA web site that should be completed annually.

This provides a way to match members' current interests with the current needs of the League.

To complete the form click here:

[Talents and Interests](#)

It will only take a few minutes

**Please complete it prior to February 1.**

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## New Year, New Membership System

A few years ago the national League of Women Voters noted that membership had been falling for years and that if the League is to continue to empower voters and defend democracy, some changes would be needed. One change about to happen is to our membership system.

### What does joining the League mean?

In the past, when you joined the League of Women Voters, you joined one of several hundred local Leagues, such as the LWV-RMA. The local League would pay an amount determined by the national and state Leagues to them. This was known as Per-Member-Payment (PMP). Local Leagues set the total amount of dues and kept anything left over after passing on required PMPs to the state and national Leagues - which wasn't usually a lot. It averaged 12% of dues, though it varied around the country as different local Leagues set dues at different levels. That's all about to change on February 1.

### Here are the changes we'll see:

- Members who join or renew online will be doing so on the LWVUS website. The "Join" link on our website will take you there.
- Suggested dues will be \$75, but members can choose their dues, any amount, starting at \$20. Revenue will be shared: local Leagues will get 20%, state Leagues 47%, and the national League 33%. This makes League membership affordable to many more people, and the national League is betting that we'll recruit a lot of new members, which is why they are dropping their share from 51% to 33%. Personally, I take this as a challenge. **We should recruit a lot of new members, including low-income members.** That will enable us to better carry out our mission.
- If you have always chosen a higher membership payment, like the Susan B. Anthony / Frederick Douglass level of \$150, the allocation of that money will change. Previously, any dollar you paid in dues over the PMP payment stayed with the LWV-RMA. Now it will be shared with state and national Leagues - to be used to offset the dues of those members who choose to pay lower dues. It's a good deed to pay more if you can afford it. We encourage it.
- Some people may want to donate to their local League at the same time as they join or renew. You'll be able to do that on the website at the same time. After you choose your membership dues, you'll be asked if you'd like to donate to your local League and given the chance to do so. We encourage that too! Any time of year you can always donate to the local League directly, by check to us or by a credit card on our website.
- In the future, membership renewal dates will be one year after a member joins, so people will be receiving renewal notices on a rolling basis throughout the year. Renewal notices will come two months in advance of a member's expiration and there will be a two month grace period after payment is due. More on this later...

Those members who don't like to pay online will still be able to pay by check. Lifetime members will still stay members at zero cost, but free student memberships have been discontinued by LWVUS. We as a local League can decide we want to keep them by subsidizing them. Feel free to share your thoughts on the matter with any board member.

### Renew before January 31 to avoid transition headaches

Members should have received renewal notices recently. If you renew before the end of January, you won't notice any difference until your next renewal. That might be good, because it's possible there might be some wrinkles in the transition! If you have questions, feel free to ask me.

Barbara Grosh [president@lww-rma.org](mailto:president@lww-rma.org)

## Announcing the 2025 LWV-RMA Mini-Retreat

**The retreat will be held on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> – Save the Date!**

The LWV-RMA Board of Directors is planning a mini-retreat for Saturday, February 8. The location and exact times will be announced via email and in the February Voter. The tentative agenda is:

### Open House

What would you like to get involved with in the League this year? This is your chance to talk to various committees about what they do and share ideas you may have. New members are especially welcome and all members are encouraged to bring friends who may be interested in joining the League. Learn about what we do in these areas:

- Voter Services
- Vote411
- Candidate Forums
- Birthday Cards to 18 year-olds
- Outreach to New Americans
- State Legislative Advocacy

### Lunch!

### State Advocacy Decisions

LWVNYS wants our opinion on two proposed positions this year: one about voting machines, the other about Ranked Choice Voting combined with nonpartisan primaries. These positions will be available in advance for all to read and study. At this meeting we'll discuss them and decide whether our League is in favor of either or both of them.

The state League has asked for our highest priorities for this legislative session, so we'll spend a little time working on that too.

### **Webinar: Public Finance of State Elections in NY: report on the first cycle in 2024**

**1/22/2025**

**7:00 PM - 8:00 P.M. Eastern**

Join us on Zoom to hear Cheryl Couser, Co-Director of the New York State Public Campaign Finance Board, tell us how the first year of public finance of state elections went. She'll tell us more about the program and what the rules are to qualify for public matching funds, who participated and who didn't, and what we can learn about how public finance influenced the elections last year.

[Register Here](#)

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Advocacy Committee meets with Rochester Metro New York State Senators and Assembly members pre-budget and post-budget, roughly early March and May. Before COVID, these visits were done in person, but now the typical set-up is via Zoom. Before the meetings, we receive "Legislative Priorities" from the state office and discuss as many issues as we can. We also ask the legislator his/her concerns and send a summary to the state legislative and deputy director of LWVNY.

Unfortunately, that time of year is so busy for our legislators that we sometimes cannot find a common time or are only granted 20-30 minutes. We manage, but both Assemblymembers Brian Manktelow (District 130) and Jen Lunsford (District 135) suggested we try to meet after the session. We were able to do so in 2024 with Assemblymembers Josh Jensen (District 134) and Ms. Lunsford.

On July 30, we gathered at Mr. Jensen's office for an excellent almost hour long discussion. One of his biggest concerns is healthcare, and he told us about his bill, A9302. It was also useful to hear his insights on education, especially regarding community schools, and his opinion that there is a need for more training of poll workers. We asked him to take a look at ERIC (S6173B/A7052C) next session and consider being a co-sponsor.

On December 17, we had a productive 50-minute meeting with Ms. Lunsford and asked for any insights on the languishing Bigger Better Bottle Bill (A6353). She responded that the bill may have to promote a full redemption center model to pass; she expects that that bill, along with the Extended Producer Responsibility Bill (A5322B) will be revised next session. She is a co-sponsor of both bills. She also reiterated her support for anything to make voting more accessible. Her biggest concern for New York State is financial; she stated that we need a federal Medicaid waiver to assist with financial stability in coming years.

Good communication with our legislators is vital. We look forward to continuing this work in 2025.

Anyone interested in learning more about this committee can contact the co-chairs:  
Scott Forsyth ([scottforsyth50@gmail.com](mailto:scottforsyth50@gmail.com)) or Barb Murphy ([murphybara40@gmail.com](mailto:murphybara40@gmail.com)).

## **Voter Services Committee**

We do not have any Voter Registration events scheduled in the next few months. During January we will be polling the Voter Services team, looking for a new time for our monthly meetings. The winter months are largely spent planning. Here are some of the questions we will consider:

- From your experience this past year, what areas or events would you change, add or delete?
- What worked and what didn't?
- What additional voter education is needed?
- Do you have experience in other areas that could be applied to our work? Ways to communicate, collaborate, or organize?

We invite all LWV-RMA members and volunteers to contribute to this discussion. We thrive in a collaborative environment.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any ideas.

Cathy Kane and Deb Gordon; [voterservices@lwv-rma.org](mailto:voterservices@lwv-rma.org)



Top Row November 12; Middle Row November 19 A.M. Bottom Row November 19 P.M.

## Naturalizations 2025

The League has been invited to participate in naturalization ceremonies that have been scheduled in Monroe County for 2025. You can find the schedule on our website, <https://www.lwv-rma.org/naturalization.php>.

You are welcome to attend any ceremony. It's a wonderful opportunity to see democracy in action. Please let Sheila Abeling know if you do decide to attend.

2024 ended with the following ceremonies:

November 12 - There were 98 candidates at the George Eastman House Museum. Liz Kmiecinski, Tamara Minter and David Newman represented the League at the ceremony and registered the candidates to vote.

November 19 - In the morning, Anita Hawkins and Katherine Smith met 35 candidates for citizenship at the Monroe County Building. Judge Nasca officiated at the event. That afternoon at the Federal Building, David Newman and Margaret Supinski met 50 candidates. Judge Elizabeth Wolford officiated at that ceremony.

December 17 - In the Monroe County Office Building, 34 candidates were naturalized. The ceremony was officiated by Judge Fatimat Reid. Beth Feldman and Liz Kmiecinski helped the new citizens register to vote. Later the same day at the Federal Building, David Newman and Margaret Supinski represented the League at a naturalization ceremony. There were 42 new citizens in a ceremony officiated by Judge Frank Geraci.

Submitted by Sheila Abeling [sheiler162007@gmail.com](mailto:sheiler162007@gmail.com)

## Racial Disparities in Traffic Stops

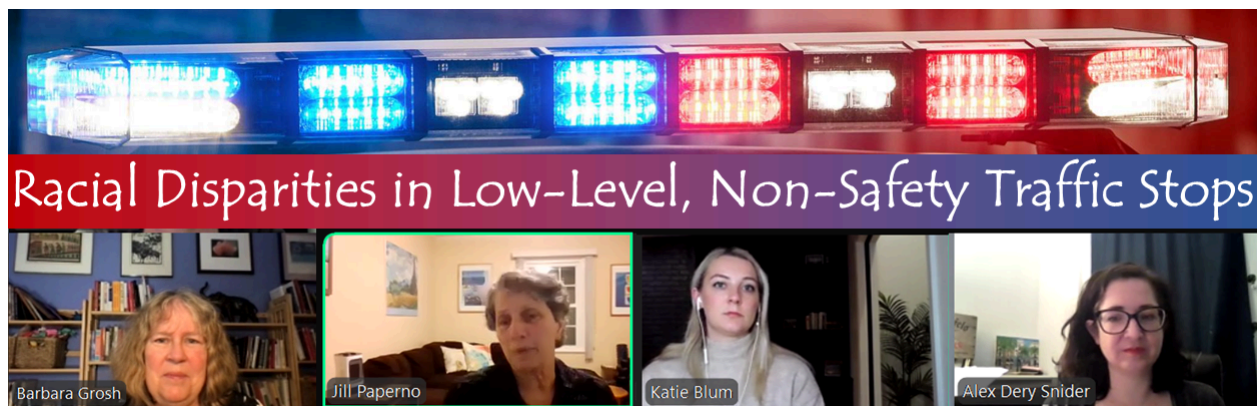
On November 20, The LWV-RMA hosted a statewide Zoom about racial disparities in traffic stops and possible remedies with three representatives of the Empire Justice Center.

They shared data showing the gravity of the issue and the effects of stopping young Black male drivers without just cause. Among the results are lack of police coverage of public safety issues such as speeding; decreased trust of police; harm to the physical and mental health of those who are stopped for non-safety reasons; and increased mistrust of institutions that could be helpful, including schools.

Presenters noted that in NYS there is no statewide requirement that racial demographic data be collected during secondary traffic stops. Buffalo and Syracuse have implemented local ordinances requiring collection of such data.

Panelists recommended working to achieve legislation to remedy the issue. The Empire Justice Center supports NY Senate Bill 7111A which bars racial profiling, requires collection of demographic and other data by all police departments statewide, bars traffic stops of motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists based solely on secondary issues, adds requirements for written consent for searches, and limits stops for certain low-level warrants. The Empire Justice Center also seeks stories of unjust traffic stops to publicize in their efforts.

*Submitted by Judy Wadsworth*



Shown as they led the discussion are LWV-RMA President Barbara Grosh, with Jill Paperno, Esq., Katie Blum, Esq., and Alex Dery Snider—all with the Empire Justice League.

## Majority Rules

In December, The League partnered with Unite NY to host a documentary screening from filmmaker AJ Schnack called [Majority Rules](#), about Alaska's statewide use of open nonpartisan primaries where all voters were eligible to vote for any candidate, regardless of party affiliation, or lack thereof. This is then linked to ranked-choice voting (also called instant run-off).

It's a great look at how updating our voting systems can improve political incentives and decrease polarization. A trailer for the film and further description is here: <https://majorityrulesfilm.com/>

The LWV of NYS will be considering a position in favor of introducing this voting system at our 2025 convention. We'll look at the proposed position in February, and this film was a great way to get a jump on understanding the system and how it works. If you were unable to attend the December showing, the film is available for rent on Prime Video and Apple TV.

**Join First Friday** for social time at I-Square in Irondequoit at 11:30 A.M. each month. Come when you can, leave when you must. There's no agenda but we talk about everything League and discuss politics. Many great ideas originate at First Fridays and a lot of work gets done.

### LWV-RMA Book Club

On November 21, LWV-RMA book club members discussed *The Confidante* by Christopher Gorham.

The author made the case that much of our political history from the time of Franklin Roosevelt through Lyndon Johnson was positively affected by input from Anna Rosenberg. She was a Hungarian, Jewish immigrant who worked with four of the five presidents from the mid-1930s through the mid-1960s.

The book teems with examples of how she persuaded people to agree on thorny issues, both inside and outside of government circles. In spite of her many contributions she is virtually unknown today.

The book club will meet next on January 16 at 4:30 P.M. via Zoom to review *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

The program for the remainder of the 2024-2025 season is:

- March 20: *Gallop Toward the Sun* by Peter Stark
- May 15: *Art of Power* - new book by Nancy Pelosi
- July 16: *Distorting Democracy* by Carolyn Renee Dupont

The Book Club is open to both members and nonmembers.

Contact [bookclub@lwv-rma.org](mailto:bookclub@lwv-rma.org) if you wish to attend a future meeting.



### Calendar of LWV-RMA Upcoming Activities

The best way to be informed about various League events is to use the online calendar. You do not need to sign in to access the calendar.

The calendar is updated frequently and is more current than a monthly newsletter can be.

On the calendar, you can click on an event to obtain information, you can add it to your personal calendar, and you can register for an event.

You can see future (or past) months' activities by easily using the < > buttons.

Access the Calendar [here](#).

PO Box 10573  
Rochester, NY 14610  
585-262-3730  
[www.LWV-RMA.org](http://www.LWV-RMA.org)

**NEXT VOTER DEADLINE:  
January 20, 2025**

## League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, Political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principal and in practice.

League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the League's purposes and policies.

**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

### Board of Directors:

President	Barbara Grosh (23-25)
Vice President	
Treasurer	Constance Flahive (23-25)
Secretary	Michele Coxander (24-25)
Director	Cathy Kane (24-26)
Director	Tess McFarland-Porter (23-25)
Director	Mary Micket (23-25)
Director	Deb Leary (24-26)
Director	Carolyn O'Neil (24-26)
Director	Karen Morris (24-26)

### Committee Contacts

**President:** Barbara Grosh

President@LWV-RMA.org

**Book Club:** Judy Weinstein

bookclub@LWV-RMA.org

**Communication/PR:**

communications@LWV-RMA.org

**Election Services / Naturalization:** Shirley Abeling

Sheiler162007@gmail.com

**Advocacy:** Barb Murphy / Scott Forsythe

advocacy@LWV-RMA.org

**Membership:** Deb Leary

membership@LWV-RMA.org

**Nominating:** Mary Hussong-Kallen

nominations@LWV-RMA.org

**Programs:** Barbara Grosh

President@LWV-RMA.org

**Vote411:** Isobel Gillen

vote411@LWV-RMA.org

**Voter Services:** Deb Gordon / Cathy Kane

Voterservices@LWV-RMA.org

## Join the League Today!



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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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:

[https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org\\_id=LWVR](https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org_id=LWVR)

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual / Associate	\$75.00
Household	\$105.00
Susan B. Anthony / Frederick Douglas	\$150.00
Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200.00
Student (full or part time at accredited institution)	FREE
Low income, call office at 585-262-3730 or send email to <a href="mailto:info@lwv-rma.org">info@lwv-rma.org</a>	Sliding