

Legislature approves voting reforms

*Same-Day
Voter Registration*

*Consolidation of Federal and State
Primaries*

Voter Registration Transfers

*Voter Pre-Registration
for 16- + 17-year olds*

Early Voting

No-Excuse Absentee Voting

Closing the LLC Loophole



**Details
on page 3**

Leadership Corner

Happy New Year! And what a great step we have taken to start this year! After years of advocacy, education, and dedication, you can count yourself among the voices that enabled the passage of the voter reform measures in the New York State Senate and Assembly. While there is still much implementation work to be done to realize the benefits, let's take a moment to celebrate this accomplishment. You are invited to go to pages 1 and 3 of this publication and read again the Approved Reforms. The significance of this event cannot be overstated! Stay tuned for further information on these reforms and how we can help to educate ourselves and the community about these changes.

Thanks to all who have renewed their membership with LWV-RMA. Your involvement is important and appreciated. Whether you choose to be an active member of one or more of our committees or to financially support our initiatives, YOU make this league a vital and vibrant organization. Our deadline for reporting annual membership to the state and national leagues is January 31. If you have been waiting for the perfect moment to join or renew your membership, NOW is always a perfect time (regardless of reporting deadlines)!


With the holidays behind us, there are many efforts underway. Voter Services teams are meeting to discuss plans for the upcoming voter registration season. The Program Planning committee is busy formulating plans for the community forums to be held over the next few months. A technology team is meeting to discuss ways to streamline the sharing of information across various committees and activities. A team is meeting to look at ways to optimize our organizational structure. And, of course, the Nominating Committee is busy preparing to propose a slate of candidates to lead the organization in the next program year. Wow—what an amazing and ambitious membership!

As a final note, sincere thanks is extended to Judy

Weinstein and Ann Carmody for their leadership at the Annual Program Planning meeting on January 12. The attendees confirmed support for the positions in place for the League of Women Voters of New York State, recommended new studies and provided Rochester feedback on the top priorities for LWVNY to consider for the coming year. (See page 4 for details.)

I hope you feel satisfaction and pride for your contributions to the League. Taking positive actions to improve voter access and participation is worth celebrating!

In League,
Gin, Kim, Judy



Let's celebrate Susan B. Anthony's birthday together!

*Keynote speaker, Dr. Irma McClaurin,
co-chair of 2018 Seneca Falls Revisited Conference & Retreat held in Rochester,
past president of Shaw University, activist anthropologist, black feminist speaker and author,
diversity champion and consultant.*

Wednesday, February 13, 2019 Noon to 1:30 p.m.
Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center
123 East Main Street, Rochester

Hosted by the Susan B Anthony Museum and House
Ticket price: \$75.00

Reservations are required. To register, go to the LWV-RMA website home page at <http://www.lwv-rma.org/> and scroll down to reach the registration link, or call 585-262-3730.

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NYS Legislature approves voting reforms

A cause for LWV rejoicing



On January 14, the NYS Legislature passed a slate of electoral reform bills sought for decades by the League of Women Voters to update New York's voting laws and increase access to the polls on Election Day. On January 24, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed these bills into law. The legislation includes two bills that require a constitutional amendment. **Thanks to our members who have advocated for so many years!**

APPROVED REFORMS:

Early Voting: Allows eligible NYS voters to vote in person during a designated 9-day period.

Consolidation of Federal and State Primaries: Makes state primary elections the same day as federal primary elections.

Closing the LLC Loophole: Holds LLCs to the same aggregate contribution limit of \$5,000 that applies to corporations.

Same-Day Voter Registration: Removes the 10-day advance voter registration requirement subject to constitutional amendment.

No-Excuse Absentee Voting: Allows voters to request to vote by mail without declaring a reason subject to constitutional amendment.

Voter Registration Transfers: Requires the Board of Elections to transfer the registration and enrollment of voters who move within NYS.

Voter Pre-Registration: Enables 16- and 17-year olds to pre-register to vote and requires local boards of education to adopt policies to promote student voter registration and pre-registration.

League work is far from over. Now that these reforms have been passed, we will need to work harder than ever to see them cross the finish line. LWVNY and its members will:

- Advocate for funding in the 2019 state budget to cover the cost of early voting;
- Monitor forthcoming regulations guiding early voting, pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds, state-wide voter registration transfer, and closure of the LLC loophole;
- Continue to advocate for Constitutional Amendments to allow for same day voter registration and no-excuse absentee voting as these amendments must pass in two legislative sessions and then be approved by voters;
- Fight for reforms that were not passed in this package, including automatic voter registration, later deadline for party change enrollment, and restoration of voting rights for people on parole.

Governor Andrew Cuomo has stated his intention to seek additional electoral reforms, including the designation of Election Day as a state holiday, a ban on all corporate donations, and expansion of upstate voting hours so that all polls in the state are open for primary votes as they are for the general election, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

SOURCE: Rachel Silberstein. "Legislature passes sweeping electoral reforms." Albany Times Union. January 14, 2019
<https://m.timesunion.com/news/article/NY-Legislature-passes-sweeping-electoral-reforms-13532415.php>



Our Program Planning/Membership Meeting

On January 12, 23 LWV-RMA members came together for the Annual Program Planning meeting. It was a pleasure to see many new members joining veteran members for the discussion of the program of the League of Women Voters of New York State for 2019 – 2021 and of our local league for 2019 – 2020. Leadership Team Member Judy Weinstein led a discussion of current LWVNYS and LWV-RMA positions. The positions are available at the *Links and Positions* link of the LWV-RMA website <http://www.lwv-rma.org/>.

After a lively discussion, we recommended that all current LWVNYS positions be retained “as is”. We were pleased to see that several ideas that we had for new studies were already covered by LWVUS and LWVNYS positions. We recommended the following new studies:

Proposal for a study on whether the state’s minimum wage should have annual cost of living adjustments;

Proposal for a study on Internet Privacy Protections for children and adults;

Proposal for a study on Solitary Confinement.

The State Board of Directors will look at the recommendations of all local leagues to determine what program recommendations it will make to the LWVNYS Convention in June. Convention delegates will vote on both recommended and non-recommended items to develop the 2019 – 2021 program.

During the planning session, we also made three suggestions for the LWVNYS Legislative Priorities for 2019. The planning meeting took place the day after it was announced that the Voting Reform Package would be voted on and passed by both chambers of the New York State Legislature two days after our meeting. After a brief discussion we agreed that it was too soon to consider the issue of Voting Reform accomplished and that continued scrutiny and advocacy would be needed. Our three suggestions for 2019 Legislative Priorities are:

- Funding for 2020 census awareness and oversight/scrutiny of the process
- Implementation and funding of 2019 Election Reform
- Criminal justice reform, including bail reform.

continued next page



Judy Weinstein of the LWV-RMA Leadership Team leading discussion; Ann Carmody recording member recommendations for priority issues; and members voting on priorities.

Our Program Planning/Membership Meeting

continued from previous page

Members also spent time determining local program. They agreed to continue existing positions and expressed interest in several new issues. It was felt that these could best served by holding public forums on the topics so we, along with the public, could become informed and then decide if a study is warranted. The topics are:

Gentrification - exploring the impact on accessibility of low income housing;

Census 2020 – offering an information forum (plans for a May forum are already underway);

Criminal Justice – researching initiatives by organizations in Rochester, such as a Police Accountability Board, Solitary Confinement, Bail Reform, Transparency/Right to Know, 2019 District Attorney’s Election, Marijuana Legalization, and Expunging of Prior Conviction Records (plans are already in the works for an April forum).

Ann Carmody provided an update on the work of the Program Committee and spoke about the Government/Advocacy committee and its need for more members. Judy Sternberg spoke about the *Get Out the Vote* efforts of the Voter Services committee and the ad hoc Structure/Reorganization committee.

While the purpose of the meeting was to discuss important issues, we had the opportunity for informal discussions and to get to know one another better.



Members interacting during the annual planning meeting.

2019 Naturalization Schedule Set

2019 brings a new Naturalization Schedule to Monroe County. The schedule can be found on our website, lww-rma.org. As of now, the League will be participating in 29 Naturalizations this year. Our dedicated League volunteers will be attending ceremonies. A special thank you goes out to Lois Winterkorn, Mimi Wilson, Kathy Farrar, Beth Feldman, Kay Saunders, Katherine Smith, Marcia Eisenberg, Julie Damerell, Margaret Supinski, Joan Rosenthal and Sheila Abeling for representing the League.

We encourage you to attend a Naturalization ceremony this year. Check the schedule and contact Sheila Abeling and your visit will be arranged. It's a very rewarding experience. You won't be disappointed.

Sheila Abeling sheiler162007@gmail.com

LWV-RMA Book Club

The LWV-RMA book club focuses on books relating to League issues. Anyone interested is invited to participate in the discussions. Join the group at 10 am at The Greenhouse Café, 2271 East Main Street, Rochester 14609.

The remaining books to be read during this program year:

Thursday, February 14 *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn (first 9 chapters)

Thursday, March 14 *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn (chapter 10 to the end)

Tuesday, April 11 *Fascism: A Warning* by Madeleine Albright

1st Friday Gatherings are Mostly Just for Fun.

LWV-RMA members gathered on the first Friday in January.

TOP: Gin Busack, Debbie Gordon, Margaret Supinski, Barbara Grosh

MIDDLE: Joan Alden and Joan Rosenthal

BOTTOM: Barbara Grosh, Jane Beck, Julie Damerell

Photos by Judy Sternberg

In Memory of Jane Chase

Jane Chase, a longtime active member of the League of Women Voters, passed away on December 30, 2018 at the age of 82. Jane was one of the leaders of the effort to prevent childhood lead poisoning while serving on the Social Policy Committee for several years in the early 2000s. The committee participated in a community-wide forum in 2004 to push for the eradication of childhood lead poisoning and held other forums to educate the community about the issue. The League's efforts, along with those of many community groups, resulted in the passage by the City of Rochester of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act of 2008. This strong legislation mandated that Rochester take measures to prevent and remediate lead paint in homes and buildings in Rochester.

Jane was also the Domestic Violence Off-Board Specialist for the New York State League and a representative to the Domestic Violence Coalition.

We will miss her dedication and persistence in these efforts and her love of the League.

Joan Rosenthal joansierosenthal@gmail.com





Coming Events!



February

- 1 First Friday (11:00 A.M., I-Square, 400 Bakers Park)
- 11 Board of Directors Meeting (Noon, Asbury First UMC, 1010 East Avenue)
- 13 Susan B. Anthony Luncheon, (Noon, Riverside Convention Center)
- 14 Naturalization (10 A.M., Monroe County Office)
- 14 Book Club (10:00 A.M., Greenhouse Café, 2271 East Main Street, Rochester) – *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn
- 28 Naturalizarion (1:00 P.M., Federal Building)

March

- 1 First Friday (11:00 A.M., I-Square, 400 Bakers Park)
- 11 Board of Directors Meeting (Noon, Asbury First UMC, 1010 East Avenue)
- 14 Naturalization (10:00 A.M. Monroe County Office)
- 14 Book Club (10:00 A.M., Greenhouse Café, 2271 East Main Street, Rochester) – *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn
- 18 Stanton, Gage & Anthony (7:00 P.M., 5 Star Bank, 395 Westfall Road)
- 26 Naturalization (1:00 P.M., George Eastman Museum)



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!

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| February 1 | May 3 |
| March 1 | June 7 |
| April 5 | |



Board of Directors meets monthly on the second Monday of each month from noon - 2:00 P.M. at Asbury First UMC. Board meetings are open to all members.

Government Committee meets monthly. For details, call Elaine Schmidt at 530-7414.

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, call 262-3730 or e-mail us at info@lwv-rma.org



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
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Rochester VOTER

A Monthly Publication of the
League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area

Leadership Team

Gin Busack (2018-2019)
Kim Byers (2018-2019)
Judy Weinstein (2018-2019)

Treasurer Elaine Schmidt (2017-2019)

Recording Secretary Judy Sternberg (2018-2020)

Corresponding Secretary Marion O'Connor (2017-2019)

Director Ann Carmody (2018-2020)

Director Mary Hussong-Kallen (2018-2019)

Director Barbara Kay (2017-2019)

Director Kris Rogers (2018-2020)

Director Gail Wilder (2018-2020)

MARCH VOTER DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 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

SPEAK UP, BE HEARD,
IF YOU DON'T SAY A WORD, EVERYTHING WILL STAY THE SAME WAY

The Voter is a monthly publication of the LWV-RMA

Editor, Judy Wadsworth

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

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate	\$75
Household	\$105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass	\$150
Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200
Student	FREE
Low income, call office	Sliding Scale