

TheVOTER

LWV-RMA Forum Goes On-line

Climate Change: This time It's Personal Small Steps Towards Reducing Global Warming



Monday, April 27
Sign-on time: 6:55 P.M.
Program starts: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Comfort of your own home; no parking concerns
We will meet by ZOOM.

Join us as we adapt to our current situation by using technology to meet. Directions for participation:

Click the following link to register:
<https://zoom.us/join/register/uJMocOmhpzou-her8eZS3h3OMIHRDqHMTg>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting on April 27, 2020 at 7 P.M.

If you have any questions about the webinar, send an email to info@lwv-rma.org or call 585.262.3730.

To learn more, see page 5.

THERE WILL BE NO PRINTED MAILED EDITION OF THE VOTER UNTIL WE RETURN TO NORMAL ACTIVITIES.

If you know any LWV-RMA members without email who receive the print edition, please share information from this issue that you think would be of interest.

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Leadership Corner

LWV-RMA CANCELS GROUP EVENTS THROUGH MID-APRIL

Informed citizens combined with educated decision-making describes the League of Women Voters. These personal assets must guide us all as we weather this unprecedented health emergency in our community.

By now, you are aware that the League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metro Area has cancelled all group meetings from March 15 through mid-April in support of the health directives and advice that has been communicated by our County, City, Health, and School professionals and experts. As leaders of LWV-RMA, we urge you all to give serious consideration to the advice that we are being provided to protect our health as well as the health of our family, colleagues, fellow League members, and neighbors. While small gatherings can be at the judgment of the individuals attending, LWV-RMA as an organization supports social distancing as a means to lessen the risk of being exposed to the coronavirus.

With the presidential primary just a few weeks away, there is anxiety regarding the impact of voter turnout and ensuring that citizens have an opportunity to register to vote and to cast a ballot. With colleges closed for the balance of the semester, we lose the opportunity to engage with this population leading up to the primary but we hold out hope for future events leading up to the general election. With high schools currently closed, we lose our engagement opportunities but hope that this window will open in the coming weeks. We will be looking for opportunities to reach out to Monroe County residents via mail and e-mail and would welcome your ideas on continuing our Voter Services efforts.

Thank you for all the support you provide to the League throughout the year. We look forward to re-engaging person-to-person as the health emergency lessens. In the meantime, please stay safe and in community via mail and e-communications. We will update you with news regarding upcoming events as they are known.

In League, your Co-Presidents

Kimberly Byers

lwv.roc.volunteer@gmail.com

585 247 4958

Judy Sternberg

jsternberg3b@gmail.com

585 683 7690.

To learn more about upcoming elections

The state League provides updated information about upcoming elections on its home page.

Go to <https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/new-york-state> and scroll down the page to reach Frequently Asked Questions and other information about the 2020 elections.

VOTING:
100% MORE EFFECTIVE THAN
COMPLAINING ON THE INTERNET

STAYING POSITIVE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19: WHAT THE LEAGUE IS DOING

LWVUS, LWVNYS and LWV-RMA are all taking actions amid the COVID-19 outbreak to provide guidance and advocacy on preparing for the 2020 primary and general elections.

LWVUS ADVOCACY - LWVUS has joined with over 200 organizations of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights in urging federal lawmakers and state elections officials to adopt key policies to ensure both the public's safety and the orderly conduct of the 2020 primary and general elections in light of the current threat posed by COVID-19.

The recommendations center around:

- **Expansion of Access to Voting by Mail** while maintaining security of the voting system and providing pre-paid postage for mailed ballot returns and additional options for ballot returns.
- **Expansion of Early In-Person Voting** to avoid backed-up polling sites and provide a safer voter experience.
- **Polling Place Adjustments** and **Voter Registration Reforms** including online voter registration and same-day voter registration for all voters in this election.

The full letter can be found at: [\[https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/COVID-19-Coalition-Letter-updated-3.19.20.pdf\]](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/COVID-19-Coalition-Letter-updated-3.19.20.pdf)

LWVUS GUIDANCE - [Voting in the time of Coronavirus](#) is a public-facing LWV blog that shares tips for voter safety in upcoming elections. Recommendations to limit exposure to crowds on Election Day include encouraging Early Voting, Vote-by-Mail, and Voting in Non-Peak Hours.

LWVNYS ADVOCACY – LWVNYS successfully worked to move the presidential primary and special election from April 28 to align with the June 23 federal and state primary.

LWVNYS GUIDANCE – LWVNYS is providing updates to local Leagues about how county Boards of Elections could react to the COVID-19 pandemic. New York State law allows county Boards of Elections to cite a public health emergency as an approved reason for requesting an absentee ballot. Erie County has chosen to adopt this as an approved category.

LWV-RMA ADVOCACY – LWV-RMA has called on the Monroe County Board of Elections to expand eligibility to absentee ballot voting via a letter by LWV-RMA Co-Presidents to the Monroe County Elections Commissioners. This letter in its entirety appears on page 11. LWV-RMA members are encouraged to write similar letters to the Commissioners and/or to their County Legislators and the County Executive.



Americans
OF CONSCIENCE

Checklist

One Way Forward Without Meetings

If you're wondering what you can do to forward League positions such as protecting equal rights and voting, one source is AoC (Americans of Conscience). The week's AoC Checklist is full of well-researched, reliable actions you can take from home. Choosing action over worry is a way forward.

<https://americansofconscience.com/03-15-2020/>

Advocacy Committee Kick-Off Meeting Selects Pilot Effort

For those who attended the January 18 Membership Meeting at the AAUW Perkins Mansion, you will recall an agenda topic focused on whether LWV-RMA members had an interest in expanding our advocacy efforts. On March 6, interested LWV-RMA members met to consider possible advocacy objectives. To structure the discussion, the inaugural Advocacy Committee meeting focused on the four 2020 program priorities identified during the February 6 program planning membership meeting: Voting Rights (Protection), Improving Elections (Legislative Reform), Redistricting (Fair Maps Campaign), and Court Consolidation. At the Advocacy Kick-Off Meeting, Linda Saalman facilitated the discussion, asking participants to identify objectives they would look to achieve under each of the four program priorities. The group then ranked the four topic areas according to the level of interest in being part of a group formulating plans to achieve the objectives. The discussion led to the selection of REDISTRICTING as the pilot effort in advocacy for LWV-RMA in the coming year.

The next meeting will focus on "Understanding Redistricting" and evaluating the potential accomplishments on which we could focus our efforts. There is some work in progress on the county legislative districts by Ann Carmody, Katherine Smith, and Judy Weinstein in their roles on the Government Committee. This effort will link with the work in progress to determine the best way to proceed.

Note that the follow-up meeting is on hold given the current health directives to cancel group meetings. The intent is to re-start this work as soon as we are once again able to convene.



Seen at the March 6 opening session are Dave Garretson, Barbara Kay, Judy Weinstein, Ann Carmody, Kim Byers, and Linda Saalman. Not pictured are Katherine Smith, Joan Alden and Judy Wadsworth.

Coming in May: Court Simplification

Please look for an e-blast and check the League website (www.lwv-rma.org) and our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/lwvofrma), as well as the May Voter for an update regarding this forum being planned for May. Our presenter must travel and we will follow the Health Department guidelines that are issued at the time.



Climate Change: This time It's Personal Small Steps Towards Reducing Global Warming



Climate Change: This Time It's Personal

SMALL STEPS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL WARMING.

Join us from home on Monday, April 27 at 7:00 P.M. via a Zoom Conference.

Click the following link to register:

<https://zoom.us/join/register/uJMocOmhpzou-her8eZS3h3OMIHRDqHMTg>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting on April 27, 2020 at 7 P.M.

If you have any questions about the webinar, send an email to info@lwv-rma.org or call 585.262.3730.

To learn more, see page 5.

Due to the restrictions on gatherings, this forum will be held online. You will be able to join the Zoom meeting with video on your computer, tablet or smartphone. You can also call in for audio only on a phone. Registration information will be shared by an e-blast, our website and social media when available.

Learn about the New York Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act that sets a statewide target of 100 percent, economy-wide net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and discover some of the many ways that energy consumers in the Rochester area can help meet that target while managing their energy costs.

One of the options we will discuss is Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), a program that allows local municipalities to procure power from an alternative supplier on behalf of their community while still receiving transmission and distribution services from their existing utility.

CCA has already come to several local communities and could soon be coming to you. Hear local community success stories and learn about a local youth program working to address climate change.

PRESENTERS:

Al Hibner, Former Pittsford Physical Science Teacher; Member, Rochester Chapter, Citizens Climate Coalition; Founder of the Penfield Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Residents' Committee;

Sue Hughes-Smith, Adjunct Professor of Environmental Health at SUNY Brockport and of Environmental Studies at RIT, and Co-Founder of the Rochester People's Climate Coalition;

Eric Koski, Vice-President, Rochester, NY March for Science; Board Member, Rochester People's Climate Coalition;

Linda Saalman, LWV-RMA member with 40 years energy experience;

Hridesh Singh, Brighton High School Senior and Co-Founder of the BHS Climate Club.

GOVERNOR POSTPONES PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

We are pleased to share that Governor Cuomo has heeded LWV advice and postponed the April 28th presidential primary and special election to June 23rd.

Stay tuned for more updates about absentee ballot deadlines and other elections information.

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services saw its last scheduled activities take place in the second week of March. From March 14 through the third week of April all other activities have been cancelled or postponed due to precautions surrounding exposure to COVID-19. Events that were impacted were those at Brighton High School, Monroe Community College, and Earth Day at Nazareth College. Below are a report from one of our last conducted events and information on more distant events that we hope will take place. Finally, as we look ahead to the consolidated primaries and special elections on June 23rd, updated information and Get Out The Vote messaging will go out to voters through our digital platforms, texting service and VOTE411.org.

OFFICE OF PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The League is annually invited to speak at the Office of People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). This year on March 4, Barbara Grosh and Judy Sternberg spoke about the 2020 Primary Elections to two sessions of OPWDD's Self Advocacy Group. Developmental Disabilities include a wide variety of physical and/or mental conditions that can be the result of genetics or brain injuries (traumatic or chemical). Individuals who participated in the day's groups are currently involved in advocating for their own voting rights. All were interested in the upcoming elections and many had questions. The Board of Elections was also present with a voting machine for attendees to try out. The experience was an eye-opener, giving a face to individuals living with developmental disabilities and instilling respect for the work they and the League are doing to facilitate the exercise of their voting rights.

VOTERCADE 2020

Votercade 2020 is a project of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House aimed at carrying the message of the power of the vote and the importance of civic discourse to diverse, multi-generational audiences. Highly visible motorcades will travel to five cultural and historic sites across the Finger Lakes Region between May and October and conduct multiple activities at each site. LWV-RMA has signed on to participate in three of these events (watch for details on SignUpGenius closer to each date):

- May 16th - Ganondagan State Historic Site, Victor
- July 25th - Mount Hope Cemetery
- Aug 29th - Rochester Public Market

To learn more about Votercade 2000 and how you can be involved, write to Votercade@susanb.org.

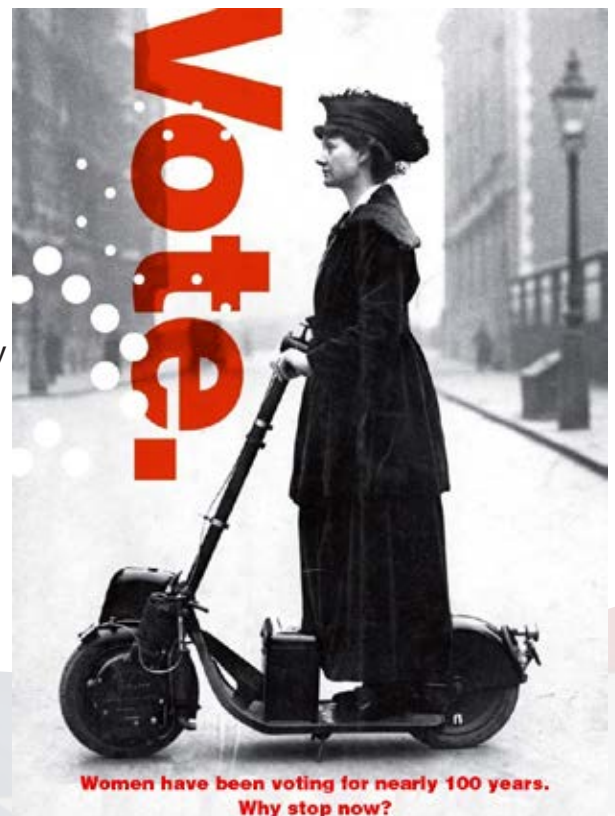
ROCHESTER VOTER ALLIANCE

LWV-RMA supports the expanded opportunities for voter registration that the Rochester Voter Alliance has organized this presidential election year. While the League will continue with its usual voter registration events at naturalization ceremonies, summer festivals, community events, the public market and colleges, members may find additional sites, dates and times through the RVA that they would like to volunteer at. RVA will conduct its events from June 15th-October 4th. Orientation and training for participation in their events will take place on May 19th, 7P.M., at the First Unitarian Church, 220 S. Winton Rd. RSVP by May 1st to Judy Schwartz at schwartz179@earthlink.net.

If you have ideas for activities you'd like to see Voter Services engaging in, we are always looking for members to join in the planning, coordination and implementation of the work we do. Please contact us:

Voter Services/Voter Registration Chair - Judy Sternberg,
jsternberg3b@gmail.com

Get Out The Vote Chair – Barbara Grosh, barbara@grosh.net



Focus on College Students

Katherine Smith and I attended the Upstate NY Vote Everywhere Coalition 2020 Summit on February 15 at the University of Rochester. The Summit was supported by the The Andrew Goodman Foundation's Vote Everywhere initiative, a national, non-partisan, civic engagement movement of student leaders and university partners. We were invited to attend the Summit by Efu Agyare-Kumi, a student at the University of Rochester who is our UR contact for voter registration.

The goals of the Coalition Summit were to bring students and campuses together to share practices and experiences in registering and mobilizing voters, develop a supportive network of student activists, and coordinate efforts to amplify the voice of young people in the political process. During the Summit, the thirteen student leaders and their advisors from nine regional colleges worked together to create and share an action plan for engaging the students on their campus in the 2020 election cycle.

During the time we attended, Katherine and I were treated to lunch, and were asked to cut a cake that Glenn Cerosaletti, the UR's Assistant Dean of Students and Director, had provided in honor of Susan B. Anthony's birthday. We then attended a session where students brainstormed ways to increase voter registration and turnout. Next, the students were broken up into smaller groups where Katherine and I contributed to these small group discussions around voter registration, voter turnout, voter education, advocacy, and some of the League's initiatives (see photo of Katherine and Myra with cake).

This was an excellent opportunity to get students' perspectives on a variety of topics, and also share the League's perspective. It was inspiring to spend time with this dedicated and passionate group of students, and we hope to be able to continue our involvement.

Another special event involving college students occurred on February 27 when Kim Byers and I gave a presentation to a political science class at The College at Brockport. The course, called "Perspectives on Citizenship" and taught by Dr. Susan Orr, a faculty member at Brockport, asks students to explore ideas about what makes "good citizenship." Dr. Orr asked us to talk about what the League does, and how the students could be involved in the issues they care about. Our presentation lasted about 40 minutes, and was followed by the students asking a lot of excellent questions.

Myra Pelz myra.pelz@gmail.com



Myra Pelz and Katherine Smith slicing a cake during a session with UR students.

Fair Election Practices Campaign 2020

The League of Women Voters-Rochester Metro Area and The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester (TIAR) are starting the 2020 Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC). Upon issuance of the certified list of primary candidates on April 30, all candidates will be requested to sign a Fair Campaign Pledge to publicly commit to running positive, issues-oriented campaigns. The names of all candidates who sign the Pledge will be listed on the League's website. A press release will then be issued to publicly acknowledge candidates for signing the Pledge. In September, a second round of Pledges from the general election candidates will be solicited followed by a signing ceremony and press conference. A Fair Election Practices Hearing Committee is established to review properly filed complaints from candidates who sign the Pledge and allege violations of the Pledge by their opponents. The Committee issues decisions regarding the complaints ahead of the elections, which are released to the media and posted on the League website and social media accounts.

If you are interested in assisting with the FEPC or learning more about the process, please contact Kris Rogers at FEPC@lwv-rma.org.



Naturalization Ceremonies

The February 27 naturalization ceremony was rescheduled to March 12 at the Federal Building. The Honorable Mark Pedersen held court for 47 candidates seeking citizenship. Sheila Abeling represented the League at the ceremony.

Another March 12 ceremony and the March 19 ceremony were not attended by LWV-RMA members. By the time of this writing, a State of Emergency had been declared for Monroe County due to cases of COVID-19 being diagnosed here. It is assumed that ceremonies will be rescheduled at a later date.

Hopefully, our next scheduled naturalizations will be held on April 23 at City Hall and April 30 at Minerva Deland School in Fairport. There should be at least one more April oath ceremony scheduled at the Monroe County Office Building.

Please check our website (www.LWV-RMA.org) for updated information. If you have an interest in attending a naturalization ceremony or volunteering to help register the new citizens to vote at a ceremony, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com or 585-223-6819.



Lila McGrath, officer in USCIS, with newly naturalized citizens.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is a component of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK! 

We know you'll "like" us!

www.facebook.com/lwvofma

Advocate for Broader Use of Mail-In and Absentee Ballots in 2020

Recognizing the need to continue to advocate for LWV-RMA's core cause of accessibility to election poll sites and the ability of all citizens to exercise their right to vote, all members were sent an e-mail requesting that they contact the Governor and their New York State representatives urging an expansion of mail-in or absentee ballots.

Since that time, the New York State Election Commissioners Association has urged the Governor and NYS Legislature to enact legislation to support the 2020 elections through the following actions:

1. Postponing the Democratic Presidential Primary scheduled for April 28 to June 23.
2. Amending NYS Election Law to allow for Absentee Balloting during all times of declared states of emergency due to infectious disease or pandemic.
3. For all Primary & Special Elections: Giving wide latitude to the local Board of Elections to consolidate polling places and election districts to best operate the election.

These actions would support the community, enabling citizens to vote by mail and protecting poll workers during this health crisis. The Presidential Primary has already been moved to June 23.

Your advocacy to the Governor as well as to your representatives in the Senate and Assembly could help to make the other two recommended changes a reality. Please consider calling, e-mailing, or sending a postcard to the Governor's Office and to your Senator and Assembly Member. Tell them you don't want to have to risk your health to exercise your right to vote! Let them know you support expanded access to absentee and mail-in ballots. On the next page is the letter that was sent to the Monroe County Board of Election Commissioners prior to the information that is now included in this article. Note a similar request was sent to the County Executive, Adam Bello, and to the Democrat & Chronicle Editorial Submission Page.

Kimberly Byers

lwv.roc.volunteer@gmail.com

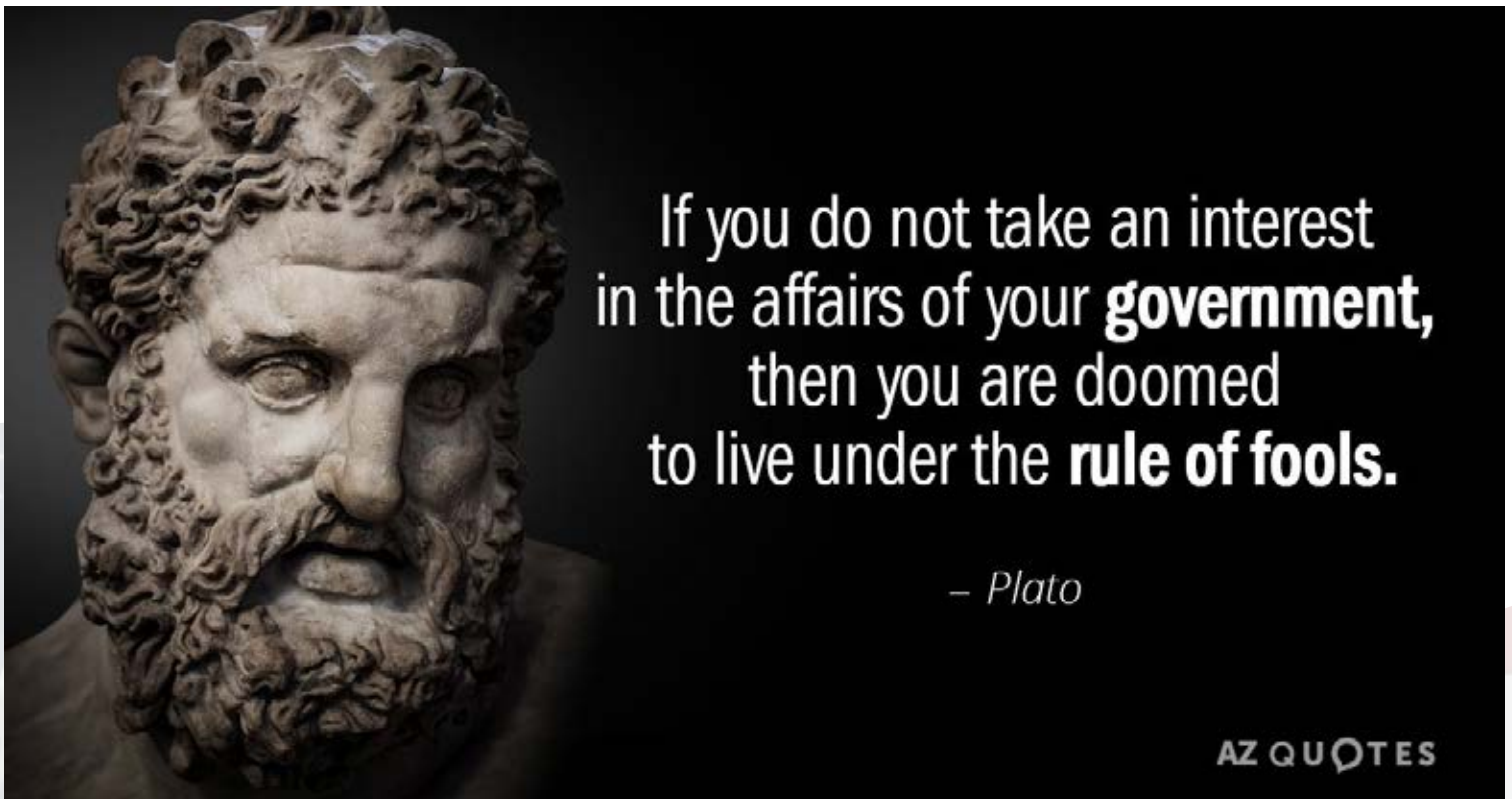
585 247 4958

Judy Sternberg

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585 683 7690.

NOTE: The Opinion piece shown on page 10 was published in the Speaking Out section of the Sunday, March 29 Rochester Democrat and Chronicle on page 13A.





March 19, 2020

LaShana Boose, Democratic Acting Commissioner

Nancy Leven, Republican Acting Commissioner

Monroe County Board of Elections

39 W. Main St.

Rochester, NY 14614

SUBJECT: Urge to Broaden Access to Absentee Ballots

In this unprecedented environment, the League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metro Area urges all citizens to follow the safety guidelines outlined by leaders in the county and city as well as by health professionals. While social distancing is a key element of the coronavirus mitigation plan, it has the potential to also drive low turnout at the April 28th presidential primary and, potentially, the June 23rd New York State primary. In an important presidential election year, the League of Women Voters urges the Monroe County Board of Elections to consider implementing new procedures to reduce community exposure risk during 2020's elections while supporting citizens with the opportunity to cast their ballot.

The League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metro Area urges the Monroe County Board of Elections to broaden the capability of citizens to apply for and receive absentee ballots. New York State law allows the county Board of Elections to cite a public health emergency as an approved reason for requesting an absentee ballot. Taking this action would follow the precedent already taken in Erie County.

We have the capability to modify our election protocol so that citizens do not have to choose between their health and exercising their right to vote. Monroe County has demonstrated the capability to adjust quickly to address the needs of the community during this health crisis. The expansion of the use of a mail-in or absentee ballot would add to the community-focused actions already taken by the County and would protect the democratic rights of our citizens in a time when strong leadership and transparency are of paramount importance.

The League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metro Area stands ready to support the Board of Elections to enable the expansion of the absentee ballot process. We urge strong consideration of this proposal.

With Admiration for the work you do, LWV-RMA Co-Presidents,

Kimberly Byers

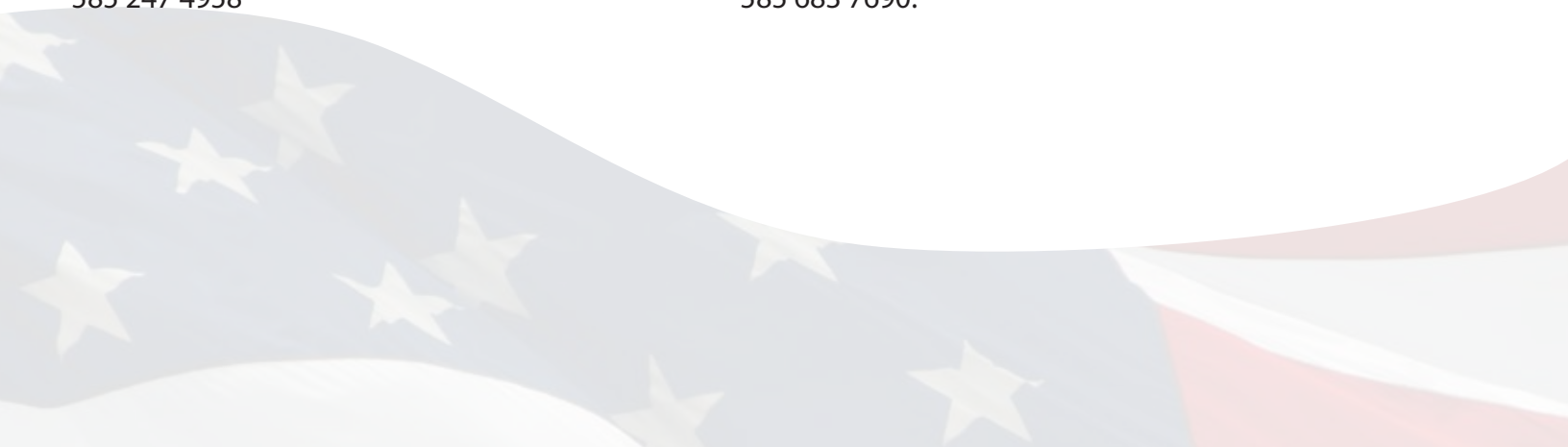
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Judy Sternberg

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585 683 7690.





No scheduled LWV-RMA events, BUT... WE CAN STILL PARTICIPATE IN LWV!



Instead of attending forums, meetings, and First Friday sessions, we can:

- Become better informed about voting rights via the LWVUSSee page 3.
- Write to the Monroe County Board of Election Commissioners..... See pages 3 and 10.
- Write to state lawmakers about absentee ballots and early voting.....See page 9.
- Learn more about redistricting issues. See links below.
- Check out the Americans of Conscience weekly actions checklist.....See page 3.

To learn more about redistricting, go to

<https://www.lwv.org/redistricting/people-powered-fair-maps-campaign>.

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/people-powered-fair-maps-campaign-tele-town-hall>

<https://my.lwv.org/new-york-state/our-work/legislative-action#redistrict>

Votercade 2020 is an initiative led and coordinated by the Susan B. Anthony Museum and House to commemorate the 200th birthday of their namesake and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. LWV-RMA is supporting the Votercade events by hosting voter registration events as part of the programming at each site. IF gatherings become possible, the following voter registration events are planned.

Votercade 2020 activities (watch for details on SignUpGenius closer to each date):

- May 16 - Ganondagan State Historic Site, Victor
- July 25 - Mount Hope Cemetery
- Aug 29 - Rochester Public Market

To learn more about Votercade 2000 and how you can be involved, write to Votercade@susanb.org.

Rochester Voter Alliance activitiesSee page 7 for details.

**Democracy is not a
spectator sport.
Tag! You're It!**

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.

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

PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610
585-262-3730
www.LWV-RMA.org

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

**MAY VOTER
DEADLINE IS APRIL 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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Treasurer Judy Weinstein (2019-2021)

Secretary Julie Damerell (2019-2020)

Director Ann Carmody (2018-2020)

Director Myra Pelz (2019-2021)

Director Kris Rogers (2018-2020)

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

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*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.lww-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 at 262-3730	\$sliding \$scale
or send an email to: info@lww-rma.org	