

TheVOTER



JOIN US

for a screening of *No Time to Fail*, a documentary that uplifts the work of our election officials.

Tuesday, October 24, 2023
7:00 – 9:00 P.M. via Zoom
Registration link on page 3



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President's Corner

VOTER SUPPRESSION AND INTIMIDATION OCCURS IN NEW YORK STATE.

Below is an article written by Lanning Taliaferro and posted by Patch News on Thursday, Sep 7, 2023. The New York Citizens Audit group referenced in the article has made claims of about 5,000 voter fraud cases in Monroe County at a MC Legislature meeting. These activities discourage people from voting which makes our efforts to encourage voting even more critical. If you hear of them calling on individual voters in Monroe County, please report it to our Board of Elections.

HUDSON VALLEY, NY — The New York Board of Elections is warning that voters across the state are being confronted by people impersonating election officials regarding their registration status, and erroneously accused of committing a crime because of how they appear in the state voter database.

"We are extremely alarmed by these actions. These individuals are impersonating government officials in an effort to intimidate voters based on inaccurate and misleading information," Raymond J. Riley III, Co-Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, said in a statement issued Aug. 30. "We strongly encourage those engaging in these activities to cease immediately."

The state BOE knows that residents were contacted in Albany, Chautauqua, Jefferson, Onondaga, Ontario, Orange, Putnam, Saratoga, Schenectady, Steuben, Suffolk, Warren, and Washington counties, spokesperson Kathleen McGrath told Patch.

"This list may grow, as this is an ongoing situation," she said. "And it's impossible to know how many other incidents may have occurred, where the voter did not alert a County Board or local law enforcement."

The State Board alerted all county boards Aug. 29 and encouraged them to track details of any incidents and report them to local law enforcement. The State Board has passed along information to state and federal law enforcement, as well.

"There have been cases where the voter has been confronted by individual(s) claiming to be from a Board of Elections (some demanding to see the voter's license). The individual(s) have claimed the voter is committing a crime by being registered to vote in multiple places in New York State," she wrote in an email. "In each case we have seen thus far, the voter has been properly registered at their current address, but had an earlier voter registration at a former address in a different county in the state (which has been properly purged by the county, as is the normal process when New Yorkers move from county to county). In other words, the voter only had one active registration in the database, and it was at their current address."

Putnam County Board of Elections Commissioner Cathy Croft told Patch that four residents had called the BOE after being approached. They called because they had become concerned about the status of their voter registration, she said.

"Calls came from all over the county including Philipstown, Carmel and Kent," she said.

State officials said county elections board staffs work year-round to ensure elections are safe and secure, including extensive record-keeping to protect from bad actors — including these.

State officials said a voter approached by someone claiming to be from the state or a county board of elections should immediately request identification. "If the individual refuses or appears under suspicious circumstances, the State Board recommends collecting as much information as possible, not providing the individual with any personal information, and contacting local law enforcement to report the incident."

Criminal impersonation in the second degree is a class A misdemeanor in New York.

"While we note the pattern of activity and believe it to be a coordinated effort, we will leave determining who is responsible for these interactions with voters up to law enforcement," McGrath said.

Although the State Board of Elections did not name any suspected perpetrators, a group called New York Citizens Audit issued a statement Aug. 31 implying that the state could be making a "precipitous and unfounded" announcement that could discourage citizen participation in "legal investigations of election procedures."

The group's executive director told the USA Today network that her group had started "doing field work after state officials failed to act on its allegations about duplicate registrations and more" and insisted her "researchers" were using "lawful methods," the Times Herald-Record reported.

The group's voter fraud allegations were detailed in a March article on syracuse.com, after which the paper's editorial board weighed in with an opinion piece: "NY election 'citizen auditors' are playing a dangerous game."

Article written by Lanning Taliaferro; posted by Patch News on Thursday, Sep 7, 2023.

Barbara Grosh

President LWV-RMA

No Time to Fail

Date: Tuesday October 24 7:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M.

Via Zoom — register here: <https://kinema.com/events/no-time-to-fail-ktua5r>

"No Time to Fail" is a documentary that follows Rhode Island election officials as they administer the 2020 election amid a global pandemic. The film gives voice to the experiences of this largely invisible yet completely indispensable workforce at this critical time in our country's relationship with election management.

Join us to watch the movie and then for a short panel discussion with some experienced election workers.

Turns Out You Can't Go to Jail for Voting

We are sorry to report that the Superintendent of the Monroe County Jail has declined our proposal to come into the jail to assist inmates with registering and voting. The reason given was that he feels the jail personnel are efficiently and effectively making sure that each incarcerated individual has the ability to exercise their right to vote.

He spells out that individuals are notified that they can request a voter registration form or an absentee ballot application form, and details how they are supplied promptly and how individuals fill them out (with assistance if they request it) and can return them either via the mail or by couriers between the jail and the BOE.

That all sounds fine, but we suspect that a little encouragement and outreach would generate more votes than the process described to us.

The good news is that the Jail Administration is willing to vet materials we send them and to pass along educational non-partisan voting videos to each inmate to view on their tablets. So we have our work cut out for us, to find and/or create such videos. If you know of some, please pass them along to Judy Sternberg at justice@lww-rma.org. Meanwhile, we are scrambling to produce some, as well as an offline version of Vote411.

It's possible that our proposal was too ambitious. For the jail to have allowed our teams to come into residential units would have required a substantial commitment on their part in terms of escorts and security. Perhaps we can propose something smaller, such as an ongoing civic education/discussion program. Stay tuned.

Submitted by Barbara Grosh

Creative Ideas for Getting Out the Vote

Susan Touhsaent, a volunteer for Voter Services, is contacting various fire stations across the area asking for them to display the following messages on their electronic signs. As of mid-September the Dewey and Ridge station has agreed, and others will likely follow.

If you have contacts with organizations with electronic signs, please consider asking them to place similar messages. If you do arrange a sign to be placed, please send the location and contact information to voterservices@lww-rma.org. That way the information can be retained for future elections.

Before October 28th:

Don't forget to register to vote by 10/28

Your voice can shape the future

Go to www.vote411.org for voting information

After October 28th:

Your vote can be cast at ANY Early Voting Location 10/28 - 11/5

VOTE in the General Election Nov. 7, 2023 Polls open 6:00 AM until 9:00 PM

Go to www.vote411.org

If you have other ideas for increasing voter turnout and want to review them with the Voter Service team, send a note to voterservices@lww-rma.org

Submitted by Kim Byers

Join the New LWV-RMA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force

INAUGURAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, OCT. 4, AT THE UPSTAIRS CAFÉ AT PITTSFORD WEGMANS

Want to help make the League a more welcoming and diverse organization? We work hard to increase civic participation among low-propensity voters. Mostly the people who vote the least are low-income, less educated, and often people of color. Any form of marginalization decreases civic engagement. How can the League be more effective in working with those communities? How can we attract and engage members who don't look like the highly-educated elderly white ladies most people envision when they hear the name League of Women Voters?

Please join a team of members who want to make a difference in how our League looks and works. Bring your ideas, your energy, and your passion. Let's come up with plans and processes to make our League more inclusive.

If you're interested, please contact Barbara Grosh, president@lww-rma.org.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY OF LWVUS

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.




Vote411 is Now Live!

Monroe County races are now on Vote411, the League of Women Voters voter information website. To see the candidates and their positions on issues as well as the questions that will appear on your ballot, just go to Vote411.org and enter your address. Vote411 will provide voting information specific to your address. If you see that a candidate hasn't posted responses, please reach out to them and let them know that you look to Vote411 to learn about candidates and are disappointed that they are not providing answers to questions that voters care about. They need to know that voters turn to Vote411 to learn candidates' positions on issues of importance.

Tell your friends about Vote411!

Submitted by Judy Weinstein

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED: **VOTE411.ORG**

 <p>Find What's On Your Ballot</p>	 <p>Check Your Voter Registration Status</p>	 <p>Register to Vote</p>	<p>First time voter? Don't worry – Vote411.org has a checklist to make voting for the first time stress free!</p>
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VOTE 411

New York State Legislative Update

The following bills were signed by Governor Hochul on September 21st. Thanks to everyone who worked to get this legislation over the finish line!

Bill #	Description	LWVNY Position
S5984A/A6132A	10-day Voter Registration Implementation -Allows for the effective implementation of the 10-day voter registration bill that was passed last session.	Supported signing
S7394A	NY Early Mail Voter Act -Allows all voters to mail-in a ballot during the nine days of early voting that prefaces every primary and general election, beginning in 2024	No Position
A4009A	Citizens Released From Jails and Voting Bill .Requires verbal and written notice of voting rights to all eligible citizens released from local jails	Supports Signing
S587 /A268	Mandatory Training Curriculum for Poll Workers -Requires the state board of elections to develop and provide to each county materials for a model poll worker training program	Supported signing
S1066/A1709	Reproductive Telehealth -Provides certain legal protections for reproductive health service providers who provide legally protected health activities.	Supported signing

As of September 21st the following bills approved by the NYS Legislature are awaiting signature or veto by Governor Hochul

Bill #	Description	LWVNY Position
S7564/A7760	Amendment to Public Campaign Finance -Changes the public financing law in ways that will undermine the program's core objective of empowering small donors. Instead of matching the contributions up to \$250, this bill would allow for the first \$250 of all contributions to be matched, taking away the power from small donors	Recommends Veto
S1381 /A1722	Plain Language Ballot Initiative -Requires proposed amendment to the constitution or other question provided by law to be submitted to a statewide vote be submitted to the people for their approval in plain language.	Supports Signing
S3505B	Even Year Election Bill -Moves the elections for town supervisor, county executive and some other local posts from odd-numbered years to synchronize them with state and federal races.	No Position
So1856/A03226	Birds and Bees Protection Act -Prohibits the sale of certain pesticides or seeds coated with such pesticides	Supports Signing
S211A/A1029A	Clean Slate - Provides for automatic sealing of certain convictions after a certain passage of time from either imposition of sentence, release from parole or probation, and if the defendant does not have a current charge pending; excludes certain offenses; permits access by certain person	Supports Signing
S2339/A6029	School Based Health Centers - Provides that services provided by school-based health centers shall not be provided to medical assistance recipients through managed care programs	Supports Signing

Please consider contacting the Governor:

www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form

Voter Services Update

The Voter Services team is focusing their efforts on attending grassroots community events in neighborhoods with historically low voter turnout. Some examples of events attended are:

- Community uplift events organized by Maplewood Neighborhood Association and Charlotte Neighborhood Association,
- Front Porch Festival at Jordan Health Center,
- Greater Harvest Church Pray and Play Events.

The number of attendees at these events is sometimes smaller than at the bigger festivals, but the number of registrations has been comparable. As of September 20, the team has registered 41 new voters at these events. The teams report having good conversations about the importance of voting in the local races this year.

Our "Vote 411" palm cards are well received by people who are already registered. Working with Annette Ramos, a Board of Elections registration coordinator, the LWV-RMA team is covering events for which she does not have staff.

Kim Byers and Barbara Grosh are working with ROCActs to organize "Souls to Polls" around Halloween. The concept is to have a lunch or mid-day picnic at two churches on a Sunday during early voting. From there, people will go as a group to the nearest early voting site to vote. The two churches involved are:

- Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church on Shelter Street
- First Genesis Baptist Church on Hudson Avenue

Members can now sign up to volunteer at these and other events using the LWV-RMA website. This replaces Signup Genius used previously. Myra Pelz and Kim Byers have also created a way for non-members to volunteer at some events on the new system.

We are hopeful that this will attract more diverse volunteers and new members. The site also provides resources for volunteers to learn best practices when registering voters.

See page 7 for upcoming events and continue to check the web site for future opportunities.

Submitted by Cathy Kane



From left to right: Cathy Kane and Katherine Smith at RIT Community Service Fair; Joint Event with Annette Ramos (in hat), a Board of Elections registration coordinator; Deb Gordon and Cathy Kane at Greater Harvest Event

2023 General Election Candidate Forums

The following Candidate Forums will all be held on Zoom at 7:00 P.M.

Monday, October 2 – Pittsford Town Council. Register at <https://bit.ly/PittsfordForum>

Monday, October 23 – Irondequoit Town Council. Register at <https://bit.ly/IrondequoitForum>

Wednesday, October 25 – Penfield Town Council. Register at <https://bit.ly/PenfieldForum>

October Registration Events Are Looking For Your Help!

- SUN. OCT 1: Wilmot Cancer Center's Warrior Walk at Genesee Valley Park. Shifts: 9:00 - 11:00 or 11:00 - 1:00
- SUN. OCT 1: Hispanic Heritage Celebration Day at the Memorial Art Gallery. Shifts: 11:30 - 2:30
- WED. OCT 4: Hall of Justice Career and College Fair at the Monroe County Hall of Justice. Shifts: 8:30 - 11:00 or 11:00 to 1:30.
- TUES. OCT 10: First Genesis Baptist Church Community Food and Clothing Distribution. Shift: 11:00 - 1:00.
- SAT. OCT 14: Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church Community Breakfast. Shift: 8:30 - 11:00
- WED. Oct 18: MCC Voter Registration at the Downtown Campus. Shifts 9:30-12:00 or 12:00-2:00
- THUR Oct 19: MCC Voter Registration at the Brighton Campus. Shifts 9:30-12:00 or 12:00-2:00
- TUES. Oct 24: Cameron Community Ministries Lunch Service. Shifts 11:30-2:30 or 2:30-5:00
- SAT OCT 29: Halloween at the Public Market from 4:30 - 7:00 This is a fun event...plan to dress in festive clothing or a costume. We will pass out candy and distribute voter information. Focus will not be voter registration since we are past the deadline to vote in the November election.

Click on the link below to see more details on these events.

https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/volunteer/volunteer_redirect.php?org_id=LWVR&volunteer_id=356503

If you have any difficulty with using the link, just reach out to me. I can get you signed up.

Kim Byers

Volunteer Coordinator, LWV-Rochester Metro Area
Voting Rights Task Force, Roc ACTS

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On September 12 there were two naturalization ceremonies. At the top can be seen new citizens and Judge Mark Pedersen. In the insert are Judge Sam Valleriani with LWV-RMA members Margret Roberts and Tamara Minter.

Naturalization Ceremonies

September brought the League to three naturalization events. Tamara Minter and Margret Roberts represented the League at an 11:00 AM ceremony on Sept. 12. They helped 38 candidates for citizenship register to vote at the Monroe County Office Building. The new citizens came from 23 countries.

On the afternoon of September 12, Sheila Abeling and Mary Menz helped new citizens register to vote at a 2:00 PM naturalization ceremony. There were 35 candidates for citizenship at the Federal Building with Judge Pedersen officiating.

On September 18, there was a naturalization ceremony at SUNY College at Brockport at 11:00 AM with 83 candidates for citizenship. Joann Kane-DeMott and Marcia Eisenberg represented the League.

Thank you so much to all our League volunteers for helping out at these ceremonies! You are appreciated by the League as well as by the new citizens.

The Time the LWV-RMA Went to the Supreme Court

The LWV-RMA has a long history of supporting the voting rights of people held in the Monroe County Jail. In 1972 Jean Askhom, who has since passed away, was the LWV-RMA Chair of Voter Services. In that role she signed an affidavit in a case brought by 72 men held at the jail against the Monroe County Sheriff and the Commissioners of Board of Elections (BOE).

Prior to 1972, to register to vote in Monroe County, you had to appear in person at the Monroe County (MC) Register's Office. In July 1972 the County Legislature, recognizing that the inconvenient office location and hours prevented people from registering, authorized mobile registration units staffed by volunteers.

Per Jean's affidavit, in August League representatives requested the Sheriff allow them to offer registration services to those held in the jail prior to trial or serving misdemeanors. The request was denied. The League reviewed the matter with the BOE which agreed the men had not lost their voting rights. However, the BOE and Sheriff maintained that since they could not be taken to the polls to vote, there was no need in having them register.

The League proposed having the men utilize the absentee ballot process. However the BOE maintained that being in the jail did not meet the criteria for an absentee ballot.

The League reached out to the people held in the jail and informed them they had not lost their right to vote and collected addresses and other information from those who wished to register and/or vote. The list led to the 72 men named in the lawsuit.

The state trial and intermediate appellate courts initially viewed men's confinement as physical disability and held that they were entitled to vote by absentee ballot. The New York Court of Appeals reversed that determination, concluding that the disability imposed by incarceration did not come within the terms of the statute. The case, known as O'Brien v. Skinner, was then appealed to the Supreme Court.

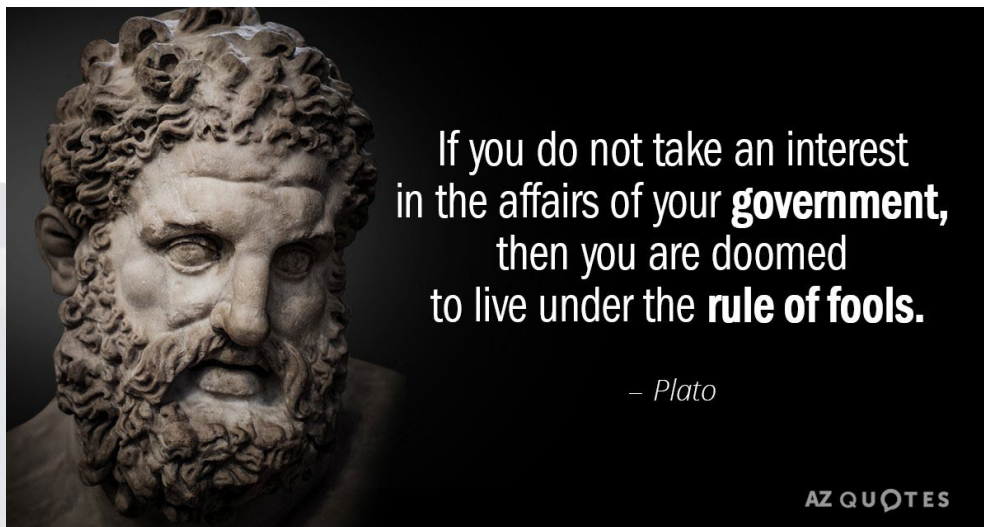
In January 1974 Chief Justice Burger delivered the opinion of the Court. The ruling states that prisoners who are otherwise legally qualified to vote cannot be denied the right to vote solely because of incarceration. The Court also ruled that if the state provides no other method of voting for the prisoners the statute which excludes prisoners from absentee voting denies them the equal protection of the laws.

Current League member Shirley Eberly, who brought this case to the attention of those currently working on ensuring those held in the jail have voting access, shared this recollection:

"After the ruling by the Supreme Court, another League member and I went to the jail to register prisoners who wished to vote. In those days, we had to have two people to do voter registration--one a Democrat and one a Republican. We each carried a large black suitcase from the Board of Elections. The suitcases contained the registration forms. No one opened them to verify the contents, but we did have to go through a series of locked doors. An interesting experience, to say the least."

Today the LWV-RMA continues to work to ensure the voting rights of the incarcerated are upheld.

Submitted by Mary Micket



LWV-RMA Book Club Discusses History of the Second Amendment

LWV-RMA members met via Zoom on September 21 to discuss *The Second Amendment: A Biography* by Michael Waldman. The Second Amendment reads in its entirety: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

The book provides a detailed history of how the Second Amendment has been interpreted since its approval in the 18th Century, noting that the amendment was written to calm fears that the new national government would crush state militias whose members were required to own a gun to serve. As the country expanded westward and fought a civil war, violence spread too, but gun control was abundant. In the 20th Century, the first federal gun control laws were passed and upheld by the Supreme Court. For 218 years, judges overwhelmingly concluded that the amendment simply authorized states to form militias (National Guard). It wasn't until the 1970s that the NRA began its campaign against gun control. Then in 2008, in the case of *District of Columbia vs. Heller*, an opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court written by Justice Antonin Scalia declared that the Constitution confers a right to own a gun for self-defense in the home. So the current interpretation of the Second Amendment is quite recent and politically charged.

Submitted by Judy Wadsworth



2023-2024 LWV-RMA Book Club Reading List

Book Club members meet on Zoom at 4:30 on the third Thursday of the months shown below. If you would like to participate in the discussion of one of our books or join the Book Club, send an email to Judy Weinstein at vote411@lww-rma.org to be sent the Zoom link. Participation is not limited to League members.

November 16	The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters, Tom Nichols (led by Mary Hussong-Kallen)
January 18	Subversive Southerner, Catherine Fosl (led by Karen Funk)
March 21	Poverty by America, Matthew Desmond (led by Barbara Grosh)
May 16	American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis, Adam Hochschild (led by Judy Wadsworth)
July 18	Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America, Heather Cox Richardson (led by Deb Gordon)



Calendar



Events sponsored by LWV-RMA are **bolded below**. The sponsors and other information on all events can be found by viewing the event on the LWV-RMA calendar. See link below.

October

- 3 LWVNYS Endocrine Disruptors in Plastics: State Policy Options (7:00 P.M.– 8:00 P.M. via Zoom)
- 5 Safeguarding American Democracy: Civic Literacy for a Secure Nation (11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. via Zoom)
- 6 LWV-RMA First Friday (11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit**
- 11 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M via Zoom)**
- 16 2023 Annual Virtual Luncheon - Nuestro Barrio, Rochester's Future: A focus on the current public safety issues facing the El Camino Neighborhood.(12:00 P.M.– 1:30 P.M. via Zoom)
- 24 No Time To Fail Screening and Panel Discussion (7:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M. via Zoom)**

- 24 Productive conversations without confrontation (11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. via Zoom)

November

- 3 LWV-RMA First Friday (11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Ave), Irondequoit**
- 8 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M via Zoom)**
- 16 LWV-RMA Book Club: The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters, by Tom Nichols (4:30 P.M.-5:30 P.M. via Zoom)**

Whenever you attend a League event, take pictures & email them to The Voter editor at micketeditor@gmail.com.

Note: For links to Zoom meetings, please visit our website: www.lwv-rma.org

For events scheduled after publication, event information, Zoom links, and registration (if required) see: https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/calendar4_responsive.php?org_id=LWVR

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

Important Dates to Remember

General Election: November 7, 2023
 Early Voting: October 28 – November 5, 2023

Date	Deadline Information
October 23	Last day for Board of Elections to receive absentee ballot application by letter, telefax, or through the absentee request portal.
October 23	Last day for change of address to be received by the Board of Elections.
October 28	Last day for IN-PERSON Voter Registration; Mail In and On Line registrations must be received by the Board of Elections.
November 6	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
November 7	Last day to postmark a ballot. Must be received by the local Board of Elections no later than Nov. 14 th . Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 20 th .
November 7	Last day to deliver absentee ballot IN-PERSON to the local Board of Elections or to any poll site in your county.

Note: To ensure on-line items are received by the Board of Elections on the required date, enter them in the system before the office closing time on that date.

Board of Directors meetings are currently via Zoom. Board meetings are open to all members. See calendar for dates and times and contact Barbara Grosh for link.

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

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**NOVEMBER VOTER
DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 15!**

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.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

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Join the League Today!



Name: _____
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Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____
Check Amount: _____
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or join us online at:

https://members.lwv-rma.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org_id=LWVR

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate	.....	\$75
Household	.....	\$105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass	.....	\$150
Carrie Chapman Catt	.....	\$200
Student (full or part time at an accredited institution)	.....	FREE
Low income, call office at 262-3730	.....	\$sliding \$scale
or send an email to: info@lwv-rma.org		