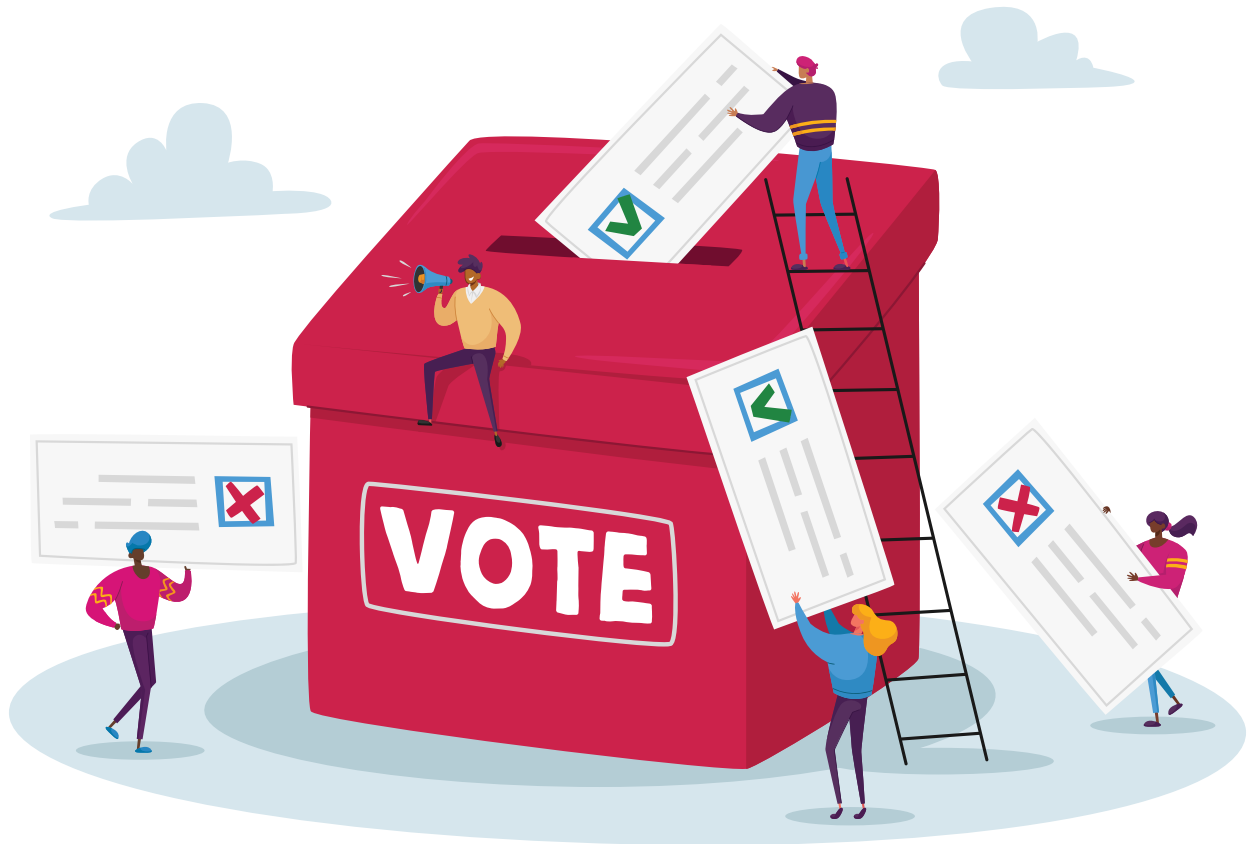


TheVOTER



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President's Corner

PREPARING FOR THE 2023 ELECTIONS

I read recently that 99% of elected officials are state or local officials. When you consider the million ways local and state governments affect us, it's a great argument for voting in odd year elections. I'm very proud of how much we're doing to make it possible to be an informed voter. It would be hard to consider oneself an informed voter in town, village or county elections based on what one learned even in local media. Vote411 is crucial to voters.

I'm also proud of our work organizing candidate forums. In 2021 I was disappointed that only candidates from one town accepted our invitation, but this year it's four, and there were several forums during the primaries, for seats which are not contested in the general election. So, we are doing a serious job of helping people to be informed voters, and our door hangers remind people what's at stake and how to vote early.

In the past month, I spent a lot of time producing two new videos designed to inform inmates in the Monroe County Jail about the election. They are designed to help incarcerated individuals to understand that they have the right to vote and that it's worth doing so. They answer a lot of questions about the practicalities.

We were optimistic that the jail would share the videos with inmates and that a few might respond by choosing to vote. Alas, we've been informed that the jail will not share them. No reason was given, but we are informed that they complied with "changes to the Correction Law 510(2), requiring the chief administrative officer of any local correction facility to consult with the county Board of Election on the same."

Pre-1972, both the jail administration and the county Board of Elections chose to interpret the law to make it impossible for incarcerated county residents to vote. Following the Supreme Court decision on the case we brought against them, members of LWV-RMA were permitted to go into the jail and register voters. In 2023 the legal precedent stands, but the League is being blocked from doing for those citizens what we do for all citizens in Monroe County, helping them to become informed voters.

It seems the Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and the Jail Bureau (JB) are accepting of the letter of the law on providing information and access to voting for eligible incarcerated individuals. We hope we'll be able to help them appreciate how the League can supplement the jail's process - that is by drawing attention to the information they provide and by active encouragement of voting, highlighting its significance and value.

We will be seeking more information on the jail's process and its efficacy, and more utilization of the resources available to us - including our local Board of Elections, the statewide work of LWV's criminal justice team, and our partners in the Monroe County Jail Voting Coalition. Stay tuned. We're not done.

Barbara Grosh

President LWV-RMA

Check out our latest YouTube videos:

Voting Rights in Jail: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoWqEu_cUa0

How to Vote in Jail: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-fAS5b-a5k>

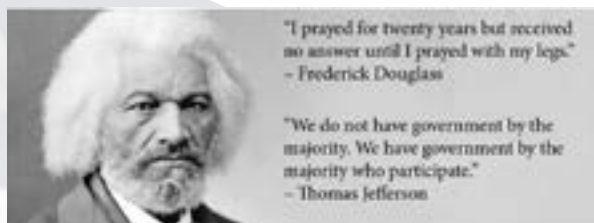
Choose a Party: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1wQWbeAMVw>

East Rochester Village Trustee Candidate Forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdJpJLPwgGk>

Irondequoit Town Council Candidate Forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jysx1zt2VmY>

Penfield Town Council Candidate Forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G1eCA7rIXk>

Pittsford Town Council Candidate Forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=183J-NEPU3o>



Souls to the Polls

The League of Women Voters-Rochester Metro Area, in collaboration with RocACTS, has implemented a new "Get Out the Vote" (GOTV) program. Modeled after similar programs in Southern states, Buffalo, NY and Niagara Falls, NY, we are facilitating "Souls to the Polls" for the first time. This program is tailored to draw people to vote through a welcoming, encouraging, community effort.

With the engagement of local churches, their pastors and congregants, as well as local businesses and community centers, LWV-RMA is working to encourage the neighborhood to be a part of the democratic process. For the inaugural program, two churches are serving as the base for the "2023 Rochester Souls to the Polls". At each site, shuttles will be available to provide round-trip rides to the closest early voting site. A free lunch/dinner will be provided along with entertainment.

The churches that will be the "Souls to the Polls" base locations are in two of the lowest voter turnout districts in Rochester and both churches support ministries to address food insecurity in the neighborhood. The churches are:

- First Genesis Baptist Church at 292 Hudson Avenue, Rochester on Sunday, October 29th
- Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church at 9 Shelter Street, Rochester on Sunday, November 5th

Food will be prepared to serve the first 100 people at each site. If we have more than 100 people, we will provide a small food take-away that include a \$5 gift certificate to a nearby eatery (e.g., McDonalds) as well as snacks such as granola bars and peach cups.

Thanks are due to all our LWV and RocACTS volunteers and to our sponsor churches, which have opened their doors and facilities to this pilot program. In addition, we are fortunate to have partnerships with the following:

- **University of Rochester:** Donation of shuttle bus and driver at Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
- **University of Rochester students:** Volunteers to distribute flyers and door hangers in the Trinity Emmanuel neighborhood.
- **1199 SEIU Healthcare Workers East:** Donation for shuttle bus at First Genesis Baptist Church
- **Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority:** Volunteers to distribute flyers and door hangers in the First Genesis neighborhood.
- **Zeta Phi Beta Sorority:** Volunteers to assist with meal service at Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.

With music and line dancing, our goal is to energize the neighborhood and increase voter turnout. This collaborative community event is a new approach to "Get Out the Vote" for Rochester and is hopefully just the beginning of increasing turnout in these neighborhoods.

Submitted by Kim Byers

SOULS TO THE POLLS!



VOTE LIKE OUR LIVES DEPEND ON IT!!
Ride with us to vote!!!

Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
November 5, 2023

Voter Services

It's been a busy month for Voter Services. We registered voters at both campuses of Monroe Community College, the Hispanic Heritage Celebration and the Hall of Justice Career Fair. We plan to be at Cameron Community Ministries later in October.

We distributed over a hundred of LWV-RMA door hangers to those many people we encountered who are already registered to vote. Most of those people are not aware of the opportunities for voting early, and they appreciate a short, easy-to-read reminder. All of these events are a team effort and we thank the members and non-member volunteers who have made it all possible. We continue to refine our procedures and support for volunteers. We are updating materials and tracking volunteer feedback about which events are most successful so we can be most effective in the future.

On October 19th and 24th Katherine Smith, Katie Powell and Theresa McFarland-Porter teamed up to visit the Participation in Government classes at the School of the Arts (SOTA). In this collaboration with SOTA's social studies teachers we're working to energize and inspire new voters.

As guest teachers, we build an interactive timeline illustrating the fight for the vote and then we invite students to become part of that history and register. Margret Roberts provided Jolly Rancher candies which were fun motivators when the kids were asked to physically move during the timeline creation. Debora Gordon provided paper slips with a QRC code that the students could use to check their registration status. It's a fun and productive gig! We registered 54 students during the program!

Submitted by Cathy Kane and Theresa McFarland-Porter



Top Row: 1-Mitsy, a Red Wings Baseball team mascot, visited the LWV table at the Wilmot Warrior Walk/Run Event at Genesee Valley Park; 2&3-Registration event at the Hispanic Heritage Celebration Day at the MAG; 4-Laurie Kash helping an MCC student with her voter registration
 Middle Row: 1&2-Preparing door hangers during LWV-RMA First Friday 3-Katherine Smith with her former second grade student, Dr. Samantha Brody, an administrator at School of the Arts
 Bottom Row: 1-Tess McFarland-Porter and Maggie Syrett (Voter Outreach Chair for UR's Committee for Political Engagement) 2-Cathy Kane and Barbara Murphy at MCC registration

October Naturalization Ceremonies

Two naturalization ceremonies occurred in Monroe County on October 10. Our League representatives talk during the rites about the League and the right to vote. They are available throughout the ceremony to talk with and help the candidates register to vote.

Naturalization is a wonderful American ceremony to witness. If you are interested in helping register new citizens to vote, please contact Sheila Abeling at sheiler162007@gmail.com.

Submitted by Sheila Abeling



TOP ROW: The 11:00 A.M. ceremony at the Monroe County Office Building involved 16 applicants for citizenship. Judge Stacey Romeo, who officiated, is shown with Tamara Minter (left) and Beth Feldman (right) who represented the League.

BOTTOM ROW: Judge David Larimer officiated at the 2:00 P.M. ceremony, held at the Federal Building. Sixteen candidates took the oath of citizenship. Margaret Roberts and Margaret Supinski helped the candidates register to vote.

Redistricting Team Update

The process continues. This is where things stood on October 17th.

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE: A lawsuit was filed to challenge the new county legislature districts. The suit was dismissed in August, and no appeal was filed. The districts will remain as is.

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: In mid-July, the New York Appellate Division ruled that the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) should draw new Congressional districts – again. The new districts would take effect for the 2024 elections. An appeal has been filed with NY’s highest court, the Court of Appeals. A hearing is scheduled for November 15th.

Meanwhile, the court directed the IRC to work on the new map. The Commission announced that no new hearings will be held prior to drawing the map, but written input is welcomed.

“The public is invited to submit input by emailing submissions@nyirc.gov or by sending mail to Attention: Submissions, Independent Redistricting Commission, 250 Broadway, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10007. All submissions received will be made available to all Commissioners and staff.”

Submitted by Dave Garretson

New York State Legislative Update

As of October 23rd, the following bills approved by the NYS Legislature are awaiting signature or veto by Governor Hochul. The LWVNY is hopeful action will be taken soon after the November election.

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 that any proposed amendment to the constitution or other question provided by law submitted to a statewide vote be written in plain language	Supports Signing
S01856/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 specified 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 remain carved out from Medicaid managed care	Supports Signing

Contact Governor Hochul at 1-518-474-8390

or

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

Opinion Piece in the Washington Post

By Danielle Allen, October 19, 2023

In a recent opinion piece in the Washington Post, Danielle Allen asks how readers are working to renovate our democracy. The most frequently mentioned organization is the League of Women Voters.

<https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/news-clips/opinion-how-readers-are-working-renovate-our-democracy>



New York State Ballot Proposals

Two proposed changes to the NY State Constitution are on the ballot for the November 2023 election. The proposals address rather obscure issues that most people are unaware of. Therefore, the proposals are a bit difficult to understand at first glance. A forum was sponsored by LWVNY and the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority to explain the proposals. Below is a summary of the key points from the forum and a link to the Zoom presentation.

Proposal 1: This relates to the debt limit for certain New York School Districts.

The debt limit is the % of the taxable property base schools are allowed to borrow. For example, if all the taxable properties in a district have a total value of \$1,000,000 and the debt limit is 10%, the schools debt limit is \$100,000.

Currently the NYS Constitution states that the Small City School Districts have a debt limit of 5%, while larger cities are 9% or 10%. There are approximately 57 districts that are in the small district category. Additionally, this group of districts cannot reduce the "debt" used in the calculation by the amount of state aid they will be receiving for the project. The other districts do not include the funding from the state as debt.

Therefore larger districts can borrow significantly more money than smaller districts even if the two districts have the same total taxable base.

When these rules were put in place, many of the Small City School Districts did not hold budget votes. Therefore the limits were set lower to protect the property owners. However, since the 1980's budgets have been voted on in all districts.

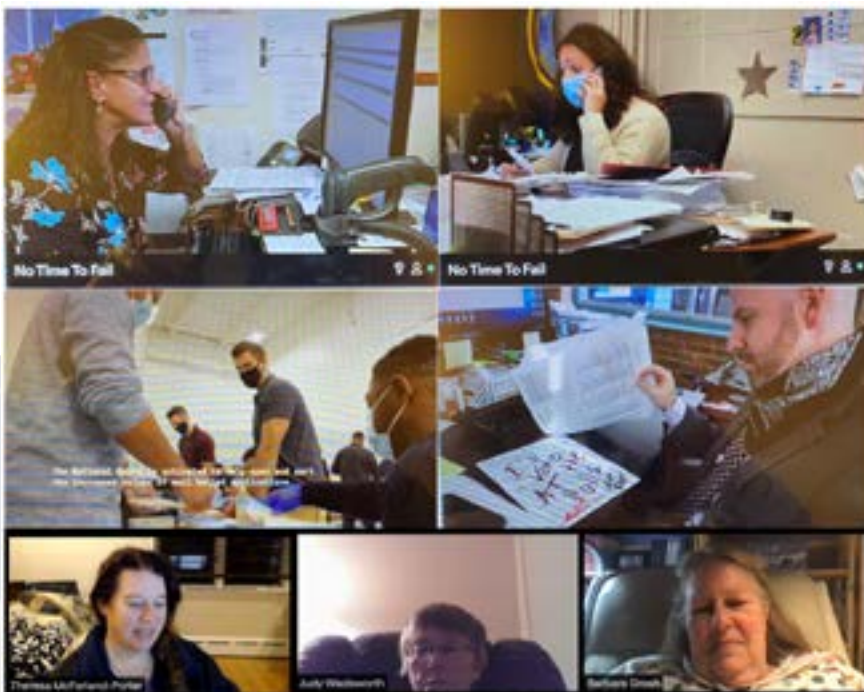
There is no group opposing this proposal ,which is designed to bring equity between school districts.

Proposal 2: This relates to how major sewer projects impact a town or city's debt limit.

In 1973 the State Constitution was modified to exclude the money borrowed to complete major sewer projects from the debt limit calculations. However, the exclusion was only good for 10yrs. The 10 year limit was included to encourage communities to make the investments quickly. However, since major sewer projects continue to be needed, every 10 years voters are asked to extend the exclusion for another 10 years. Ending the exclusion could prevent communities from making necessary sewer improvements. There is no group opposing this proposal.

Here is a link to the forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xXgf-ugFT0>

Submitted by Mary Micket



On October 24, The LWV-RMA sponsored a showing of *No Time to Fail*, a film showing how the Board of Elections in Rhode Island coped with the unusual requirements of the 2020 election. The photos in the top two rows show some of the featured election workers. COVID restrictions had led to increased reliance on mail-in ballots and early voting, and one of the presidential candidates argued that those methods were corrupt and led to his loss of the election. After the film, a few LWV-RMA members (seen in the bottom row) discussed the film.

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@lwg-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)

Editor's Correction

The picture below appeared in the Voter in October with an incorrect caption. It is a picture of Deb Gordon and Barb Murphy at the Greater Harvest Event. Apologies to Barb who is a consistent presence at our voter registrations!



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.

November

- 1 Fordham Law School and the New York State Bar Association sponsored forum Gubernatorial Succession in New York (6:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M. via Zoom)
- 3 **LWV-RMA First Friday** (11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Avenue), Irondequoit
- 7 **VOTE TODAY** (unless you already have)
- 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)

- 16 News Literacy Project, the National Institute for Civil Discourse and the League of Women Voters forum on Productive Conversations Without Confrontation. (7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. via Zoom)

December

- 1 **LWV-RMA First Friday** (11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.) I-Square, 400 Bakers Square (off Titus Avenue), Irondequoit
- 13 **LWV-RMA Board Meeting** (6:00 P.M.–7:30 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!

Join First Friday for social time at I-Square in Irondequoit.

There's no agenda but we talk about everything League and lots of political discussions. A lot of great ideas originate at First Fridays and a lot of work gets done.

First Friday

- November 3
- December 1
- January 5
- February 2
- March 1
- April 5
- May 3
- June 7



Come when you can. Leave when you must.

Look closely to see how participants came and left during the August 4 First Friday gathering.

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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www.LWV-RMA.org

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League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area

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**DECEMBER/JANUARY VOTER
DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 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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Name: _____
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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		