

# TheVOTER

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
ROCHESTER METRO AREA

## Annual General Membership Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 2025 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

597 East Avenue, Rochester

Mingle with friends.  
Make new friends.

Enjoy tasty treats.  
Do League business.



**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW YORK STATE

**61<sup>st</sup> Biennial Convention**

June 20-22, 2025

Albany New York

Interested in Attending??

See Page 3 for Information

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## Only You Can Avert Constitutional Crises

When I took office as President of the League in 2021, I knew that by June of 2025 I'd be done. It's right there in Article 4, Section 1 of the by-laws: "No officer shall be eligible for election to the same office for more than two (2) full consecutive terms, up to 4 full years." I think it's a great principle.

So why am I running for president for an additional year? I'm creepily reminding myself of our current US president who seems to spend a lot of time plotting how to stay on beyond his constitutionally-limited term. I don't think either him or me overstaying is a good thing.

I'm running for an additional half term because the Nominations Committee couldn't find anyone with the requisite skills who was willing to take on the presidency. Let me spell that out a little. The president is the spokesperson for the League, so we need someone who's not afraid of public speaking and knows the culture of the League well enough to speak in the nonpartisan yet no-nonsense way the League speaks. The president runs the monthly board meetings, which means s/he has to have a decent understanding of what we do in a year. The president feels responsible for the League holding together and getting stuff done, which either implies good organizational and interpersonal skills and/ or a willingness to pitch in and do what s/he sees needs doing in a pinch.

The keys to making the presidency something people are willing to take on (in my humble opinion) are:

- Build committees that do the vast majority of the work with minimal supervision
- Build on-ramps where people acquire and appreciate League culture

We have a whole raft of talented new and less-new members who could really contribute to a lively local League, one where a new president will quickly emerge.

### What do you want to do to make democracy work?

If you don't know how to get involved, talk with a committee chair or member, with me or another board member, or with Kim Byers, membership chair. We will help you find the niche where your skills will make us a vibrant League and you will acquire the knowledge to become a League leader, if you like that sort of thing.

League-member interests is what determines what a League does. We are good at lobbying our Senators and Assembly members on state issues of League interest. Not every League does. We have members who are patient and diligent about registering voters in low-turnout parts of the city. Not every League does. Other Leagues do other things: some are co-programming with the Girl Scouts to build civic knowledge engagement in our youth. Until someone here is willing to step up, we won't. We have members who feel driven to help get out the vote in red states with voter suppression: we have sent thousands of post-cards to help people vote. We are currently reaching out to two local demographic groups with low voter turnout: 18-year olds and New Americans.

**What's on your mind? And what do you know how to do?** Could you help plan educational forums for our members and the wider community? Help maintain the website or send out the emails? Run zoom events? We need a lot of hands to make a vibrant League.

The board briefly entertained amending the by-laws to allow officers to stay on longer so that my next year will not be illegal. I vetoed it. We have a strong incoming board and I see new leadership emerging, permitting old leaders like me to have a rest while others' leadership blossoms. You can help make that happen.

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

## LWV-RMA Annual Meeting

June 5, 2025, 5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

Members will gather and:

- Bestow the annual Making Democracy Work Award (winner to be announced soon)
- Bestow the Carrie Chapman Catt Award to a League member (winner to be announced soon)
- Recognize members with the "You Make Us Proud" Award
- Elect officers and board members for the next year (see P. 6)
- Discuss and approve our budget for the next year
- Receive reports from all of our committees on the past year's work
- Hear from President Barbara Grosh on where we are and where we're going
- Enjoy delicious appetizers and drinks while we meet up with old friends and make new ones

Materials for the meeting (slate of the Board of Directors, proposed budget, awardees) will be available for download in the members-only section of the website by May 6. An email will be sent when they are available. You will need to be logged in to access them.

There is a \$10 fee for this event. A registration link will be sent by email along with the link to the materials.

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## LWVNYS Convention: Call for Delegates

LWV-RMA has an opportunity to send 6 delegates to the State Convention held in Albany. The convention will kick off on Friday, June 20th at 5:00 P.M. with Celina Stewart, Chief Executive Officer of the League of Women Voters of the United States. The convention will end on Sunday June 22 at 12:00 P.M.

Delegates representing the local Leagues come together to make the important decisions that will guide LWVNYS through the next two years including the election of officers and directors, and the adoption of a budget, bylaws amendments, and our state program for 2025-2027.

There will be workshops on various topics including Tools to Get Out the Vote, Building Membership, Pushing Back, and DEI. Various Leagues will showcase their initiatives. Delegates will vote on proposed positions including those on Ranked-Choice Voting and Nonpartisan Primaries.

The convention is an opportunity:

- to meet and network in person with League leaders from all over the state
- to make new friends and renew old friendships
- to collaborate and tackle the challenges we all face

LWV-RMA will pay the registration fee and reimburse travel, hotel room and meal expenses for attendees. If you are interested in attending the convention, please contact Barbara Grosh at [president@lwv-rma.org](mailto:president@lwv-rma.org) or phone: (585) 415-8251 by May 20<sup>th</sup>.

## The Outreach to New Americans Committee

The Outreach to New Americans Committee met twice in April to begin our work to “help new Americans feel more motivated and more prepared to vote,” as our chapter’s President Barbara Grosh noted in the March 2025 newsletter. We started this initiative because data from the Board of Elections show that new citizens rarely exercise their right to vote, even though they are registered.

The Outreach to New Americans Committee met on April 5<sup>th</sup> to brainstorm strategies and sites where we could connect with new voters.

Over the next few weeks, we drew up some talking points as a guide to “pitch” our message and identified about a dozen community groups and organizations to begin our outreach. At our meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup> we divided up the groups and organizations for initial phone contact by Committee members. We also discussed ways to follow up with new citizens closer to elections to provide more timely information and encouragement.

At our next meeting we will discuss the results of our initial outreach and further discuss strategies such as retaining new voter contact information for follow-up with new voters. The date and time of our next meeting will be in early May, exact details TBA.

We would welcome your thoughts, especially if you have attended naturalization ceremonies and/or have experience working with new citizens!

Interested in joining us on the Outreach to New Americans Committee? Have ideas about groups, agencies, congregations, or organizations that we should contact as part of this initiative? Thoughts on how best to follow up with newly naturalized citizens?

Please send me an email [elynjen5@gmail.com](mailto:elynjen5@gmail.com)

*Evelyn Jennings*

*Outreach to New Americans Committee, chair*



From Left to Right: Barbara Grosh, Evelyn Jennings, Pat Willis, Laurie Pierce, and Margaret Supinski at April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting



## Fight Climate Change: The Inflation Reduction Act and Savings for Homeowners

John Smillie will discuss the Inflation Reduction Act and the provisions that make it a powerful bill for fighting climate change, with a focus on the tax credits and rebates available to homeowners for electrifying their own lives.

John Smillie lives mostly in Crawfordsville, Indiana, where over the past several years he has served as a Congressional Liaison for his local chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby, as well as the chair of the Climate Team for his local LWV chapter.

He recently came to Western New York for his wife's academic sabbatical, bringing their young son. He has made significant progress electrifying his own home in Indiana, and has been featured in [Canary Media](#) for his philanthropic work bringing solar to local nonprofits, and in [Bloomberg](#) for being an "energy nerd".

The discussion will be over Zoom May 8, 2025, 7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. To register click [here](#).

## Voter Services Update

A demonstration of the new voting system, Express Vote XL, is planned for the evening of Monday, May 5th. The Board of Elections will bring a machine to The Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, 597 East Avenue, Rochester for LWV-RMA members and volunteers, as well as other groups, to get acquainted with the new voting procedures.

The event will be from 5:30 P.M. until 7:30 P.M.

After an endorsement from the League of Women Voters US, we provided voter registration at a HandsOff! rally on April 5th. Most of the attendees were registered, but our educational materials were well received. Our table was a public show of support for this non-partisan initiative to fight illegal actions being taken by the executive branch. We will continue to support non-partisan efforts to hold elected officials accountable.



An anonymous supporter joined Pat Willis, Cathy Kane and Scott Forsyth at the HandsOff! Rally on April 5th.

The Voter Services team meets on the last Thursday of the month via Zoom. We invite anyone interested in hearing more about our work to contact Deb Gordon or Cathy Kane at [voterservices@lwv-rma.org](mailto:voterservices@lwv-rma.org).

At last, a table large enough for all our materials at Walking In God's Grace Health Fair on April 11th. Attendees were enthusiastic about our new QR code enabled version of "Who Represents You" and our custom made "I Voted" stickers.



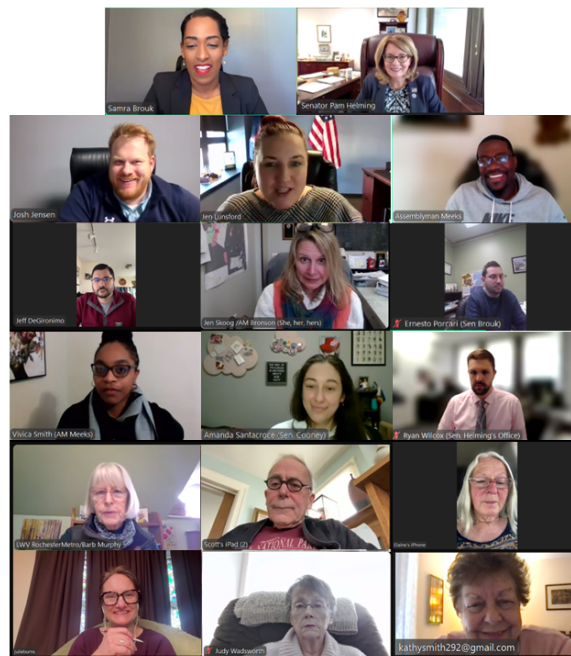
## New York State Advocacy Meeting

During March, members of the LWV-RMA Advocacy Committee met via Zoom with members of our legislative delegation to Albany to learn their priorities for this legislative session as well as to discuss the following League issues:

- Fair and Timely Parole
- Elder Parole
- ERIC Central, Multi-State Database of Registered Voters
- Financial Support for the Public Campaign Finance Board
- Financial Support for Local Boards of Elections
- Proposed Changes to Discovery Rules (Kalief's Law)

Once the state budget is approved, the committee will schedule new appointments to discuss non-budgetary policy issues with our state lawmakers.

*Submitted by Judith Wadsworth*



Seen during separate meetings are the elected officials, staff personnel, and LWV-RMA members who participated in these sessions.

Row 1 (top): NYS Senators Samra Brouk and Pamela Helming;

Row 2: Assembly Members Josh Jensen, Jennifer Lunsford, and Demond Meeks;

Row 3: Jeff DeGirionimo, director, fiscal studies for Republican Conference for Senate Minority Leader Robert Ort; Jen Skoog, Assembly Member Harry Bronson's Chief of Staff; Ernesto Porcara, Legislative Director & Counsel, Senator Samra Brouk;

Row 4: Vivica Smith, Assembly Member Demond Meeks' Legislative Assistant; Amanda Santacroce, Senator Jeremy Cooney's District Director; Ryan Wilcox, Senator Pamela Helmings' Chief of Staff & Legislative Director;

## Nominations for LWV-RMA Board of Directors

The LWV-RMA Nominating Committee is proposing that the following candidates be elected at the Annual Meeting for the positions and terms shown. Look for information on the candidates in the packet of meeting materials that will be posted on the website on May 6th.

	Role	Term
Barbara Grosh *	President	2025 - 2026
Julie Burns	Vice President	2025 - 2026
Constance Flahive *	Treasurer	2025 - 2027
Marla Miller	Secretary	2025 - 2027
Donna Gardner	Director	2025 - 2026
Tess McFarland-Porter *	Director	2025 - 2027
Mary Micket *	Director	2025 - 2027
Pat Willis	Director	2025 - 2026

\*currently serving

Cathy Kane and Karen Morris, Directors whose terms end in 2026 will continue on the Board.

### Committee Leadership Changes:

Membership: Kimberly Byers and Mary Micket Co-chairs

Naturalizations: Margret Roberts

New Americans: Evelyn Jennings

Nominations: Open (Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting)

## Membership Committee Update

Kim Byers and Mary Micket have agreed to become Co Chairs of the membership committee. Kim will focus on recruitment and retention of members. Mary will focus on the membership databases and administrative functions.

As detailed in the January 2025 President's Letter in *The Voter*, effective February 2025, members who join or renew their membership online are doing it on the LWVUS membership system. That change may not be obvious, because you can reach the LWVUS system through the "join/renew" link on the LWV-RMA website. The LWV-RMA membership list, including renewal dates, was copied into the national system at the end of January.

As with any system conversion, there have been some hiccups, but the teams are working to resolve the issues. If you receive any notices from LWVUS regarding payments or renewals that appear incorrect or you do not understand, please contact us at [membership@LWV-RMA.org](mailto:membership@LWV-RMA.org) and we will work with you to resolve the issue.

*Submitted by Kim Byers and Mary Micket*



## Naturalization Ceremonies

April 15<sup>th</sup> brought LWV-RMA to Rochester for two naturalization ceremonies. David Newman and Margret Roberts represented the League at both ceremonies.

Judge Michael Dollinger officiated at the morning ceremony at the Monroe County Office Building. There were 49 new citizens. At the afternoon naturalization ceremony, there were 38 new citizens; Judge Colleen Holland officiated at the Federal Building.

If you have never attended a naturalization ceremony, you should put one on your calendar. The ceremonies are not only rewarding for the new citizens, but also for the attendees. Also if you'd like to volunteer at a ceremony, let Sheila Abeling know at [sheiler162007@gmail.com](mailto:sheiler162007@gmail.com).

*Submitted by Sheila Abeling*

## Book Review: *The Privatization of Everything*

One description of the ways that our nation is divided is the emphasis on "me" vs "we." This can be worded in many different ways. In *The Privatization of Everything*, by Cohen & Mikaelian, they use the term "citizen" for those who recognize the value of public goods and "consumer" for those who prioritize things that benefit themselves rather than the community as a whole. As they say:

"A consumer should never pay for a service he does not use. Citizens, on the other hand, agree to pay for services they do not directly use because they can see how they benefit all of us, and they see the indirect benefit to themselves. As citizens we realize that even if we never set foot on a city bus, the fact that others do alleviates congestion, reduces air pollution, benefits the economy by getting people to work, and benefits all of us by getting the people we rely on – the bank worker, the dry cleaner, the barista, or our mother's caregiver – to their jobs. So it is something that *all* citizens benefit from subsidizing. A consumer may not see that, but it is obvious to citizens."

The book goes on to give many examples of public goods like healthy food, clean water, quality education, criminal justice, parks, libraries, and scientific progress that have been recognized as just that – public goods – which are increasingly being privatized, moved out of the public realm to control by profit-making enterprises to the detriment of society as a whole. They also highlight episodes of resistance that have successfully reversed this trend.

I find this formulation well reasoned, well presented, and useful in deciding when and how to push back on the forces of privatization.

*The Privatization of Everything: How the Plunder of Public Goods Transformed America and How We Can Fight Back* by Donald Cohen & Allen Mikaelian, The New Press, 2021. ISBN 978-1-62097-797-2.

*Submitted by David Newman*



## New Members

LWV-RMA Membership continues to grow. 19 people joined the League in the first three months of 2025. Please welcome our new members:

Yvonne Arnold	Donna Gardner	Barb Reardon
Cynthia Barasz	Evelyn Jennings	Margaret Riemer
Karen Sue Brown	Tina McCann	Lydia Rivera-Warr
Bonnie Crawford	Sandra Mitzner	Joan Smith
Carol Crumlish	Julie Mohanlall	Sarah Thompson
Nancy Donals	Laurie Pierce	Lorraine Till
		Judy Trabert

## Do you have questions about Monroe County's New Voting Machines?

Join LWV-RMA's Voting Services Team and representatives of the Board of Elections for a demonstration on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>.

The event will be at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word at 597 East Avenue from 5:30 P.M. until 7:30 P.M.



## Book Group

Members and non-members are welcome to participate in the LWV-RMA Book Group.

The group meets using Zoom on the third Thursday of every other month. The remaining books in the current reading cycle are:

May 15: *"Art of Power"* by Nancy Pelosi

July 17: *"Distorting Democracy"* by Carolyn Renee Dupont

Send a note to [bookclub@lwv-rma.org](mailto:bookclub@lwv-rma.org) if you would like to attend a meeting.

Submitted by Judy Wadsworth



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

**On May 20**



**on your district's budget  
& board member candidates.**

### **Calendar of LWV-RMA Upcoming Activities**

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

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

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

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

Access the Calendar [here](#).

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

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

**The next Voter will be mid-June,  
after the Annual Meeting**

## League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

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

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

**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

### Board of Directors:

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

### Committee Contacts

**President:** Barbara Grosh  
President@LWV-RMA.org

**Book Club:** Judy Weinstein  
bookclub@LWV-RMA.org

**Communication/PR:**  
communications@LWV-RMA.org

**Naturalization:** Sheila Abeling  
Sheiler162007@gmail.com

**Advocacy:** Barb Murphy / Scott Forsyth  
advocacy@LWV-RMA.org

**Membership:** Kimberly Byers / Mary Micket  
membership@LWV-RMA.org

**Nominating:** Mary Hussong-Kallen  
nominations@LWV-RMA.org

**Programs:** Barbara Grosh  
President@LWV-RMA.org

**Vote411:** Isobel Gillen  
vote411@LWV-RMA.org

**Voter Services:** Deb Gordon / Cathy Kane  
Voterservices@LWV-RMA.org

**Join the League Today!**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please send this form and your check payable to the LWVUS to:  
LWV-RMA,  
PO Box 10573  
Rochester, NY 14610

[Or join the LWV online by clicking here.](#)

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Dues are payable to LWVUS. The link on LWV-RMA will direct you to the LWVUS site. A portion of your dues will be distributed to LWV-RMA and LWVNYS.

Suggested dues are \$75, but you may choose any amount of \$20 or more.

Choosing more than \$75 allows LWV-RMA to fund programs while subsidizing membership for those who cannot afford the full \$75.