

TheVOTER

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW YORK

REGIONAL TRAINING Comes to Rochester

PREPARING FOR 2026



11 April 2026 9:15 AM – 3:15 PM
Third Presbyterian Church

**This training workshop delivers actionable skills
useable by LWV-RMA this year.**

For regional training [Register here by April 3rd](#)

It's Women's History Month

Honor Your Favorite Suffragist
and put the Rage in Suffrage.

Ida B. Wells
Carrie Chapman Catt
Lucy Burns
Mary Church Terrell
Susan B. Anthony

The San Francisco League has designed
some great shirts. They are available in
many styles and colors.

[Shop here.](#)

**Learn more about Alice Paul and Carrie
Chapman Catt on page 8**

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President's Letter

Sharing Vote411.org Beyond Monroe County

There will be many races on the ballot in NY this year as the even-year elections law goes into effect for the first time. It's bound to confuse voters, especially when supervisors who were just elected last year face re-election already.

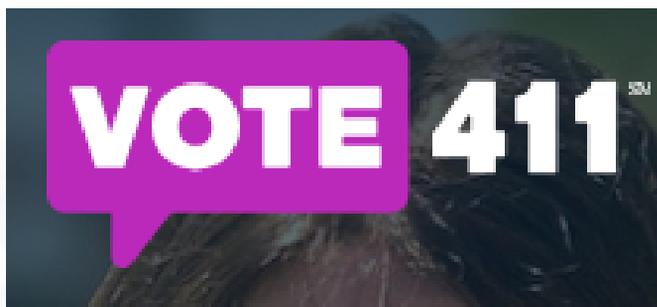
In 2025, candidates stepped up to run in places where they would not previously have had a chance of winning, and voters responded. There were surprise upsets, not just in the towns of Monroe County but the counties that surround us. It pained me that we don't have Leagues serving those counties, supporting that upswelling of participation.

In 2026, we will be working to implement Vote411 for local elections in Wayne, Ontario, Livingston, Wyoming, Genesee and Orleans counties. We are reaching out now to those counties' Geographic Information Systems (GIS) departments to get the map data showing town boundaries, and to each Board of Elections for the list of offices up for election. We will give the GIS data to LWVNYS for upload and then upload the list of elections for each county. Later, when petition-gathering season is over, we will upload the list of candidates for each of those offices.

If we get that far, we will have made it easier for voters to know what is going on and who is on their ballots. We hope to complete the last step as well: to invite the candidates to build their profiles to help voters get to know them. This is always the most difficult step with Vote411! If you would like to help with outreach to candidates in these counties (probably starting by contacting the county political committees), we would like to hear from you. We are also starting to get invitations to do voter registration events in those counties. If you know suitable occasions for League tabling, please speak up. And, of course, watch for opportunities to staff those tables. I have a secret dream of spawning new Leagues all around us!

As this goes to press, we're about to start our Google advertising. We hope that more voters than ever will learn about Vote411.org and use it to learn about all the candidates on their ballots.

Barbara Grosh
president@lww-rma.org



New York Health Act

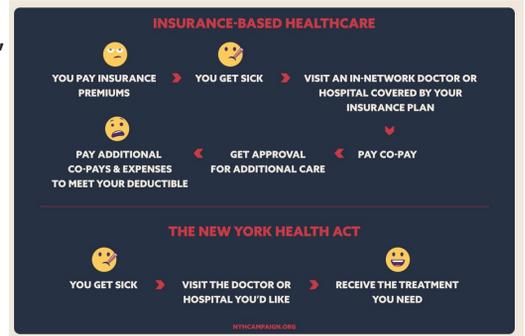
The LWNYS Health Care Committee has identified several bills before the legislature as worthy of our support – as individuals and as a local League. Chief among these is the NY Health Act (NYHA) - A1466 / S3425 - which would create a single payer system for health care for all New York residents.

Why do we need it? Currently, 740,000 New Yorkers are in collection with medical debt and over 1 million do not have health insurance. This will worsen as changes at the federal level impact our state. Even worse, we pay high premiums and have worse care than people in all other industrialized countries because they have some form of universal health care.

What would it do? New York State would become the insurer for all New Yorkers. This would eliminate monthly premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and coinsurance for all medical care including doctors, hospitals, dentists, mental health professionals, and long-term care - in-home and nursing home. Under the NYHA the state would take over payment for Medicare, Medicare Advantage Plans, and Medigap policies.

There would be no more in-network and out-of-network physicians. You would choose your doctor and hospital, not the insurance company.

Businesses would no longer have to pay insurance costs for their employees – it would be paid for by taxes. Employees would not have to worry that they would lose insurance if they were laid off or moved to a new job. Workers' Compensation costs would shrink because it would not have to cover medical care. Auto insurance premiums would shrink because they would not have to cover medical care. It would save struggling rural hospitals.



How do we pay for it? We are paying for everyone's medical care now. Not only do we pay for our health insurance but about 40% of medical costs in the state are already covered by taxes – not only Medicare and Medicaid but the health care of public employees including teachers, law enforcement, and the people who plow the streets.

Savings under the New York Health Act (2025 \$ billion)	
Health plan administration, marketing, profit	26.5
Health care provider administration	18.3
Prescription drugs and devices	13.4
Total	58.2
New Costs under the New York Health Act (2025 \$ billion)	
Increase in medical services	11.7
Enhanced provider fees	9.6
Universal long-term care	20.1
Total	41.4
NET SAVINGS	16.8

By cutting waste, including marketing costs, and by using the negotiating power of 20 million New Yorkers, it is estimated that the average resident would save \$4,000 per year while getting additional benefits.

Who is against it?

The insurance industry because it cuts them out of the picture. Some unions who make a point of negotiating extra-fancy insurance policies for their members. Some health care providers and health care groups who charge much more than average fees. The NY Academy of Family Physicians supports; the Medical Society of the State of NY does not.

Annual Income	Annual Employee Payment under NYHA (no more than 20% of payroll tax)	Average Annual Employee Contribution under Status Quo for a family plan*
\$25,000	\$0	\$6,296
\$50,000	\$320	\$6,296
\$75,000	\$710	\$6,296
\$100,000	\$1,135	\$6,296
\$200,000	\$3,135	\$6,296
\$400,000	\$7,655	\$6,296

For more information go to NYHcampaign.org

Next Steps: (1) [Sign the petition](#). (2) Contact your legislators to ask them to support the bill.

-- David Newman, MD

LWVNY Regional Training

The LWVNY regional training will be held in Rochester on Saturday April 11, at the Third Presbyterian Church, 4 Meigs Street, Rochester from 9:15 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. Join us as we prepare for the 2026 election. We will discuss several topics to improve our impact and our reach in the communities we serve.

You can look forward to these training topics:

- Advocating and Taking Action
- Observer Corps
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Youth Engagement / Brand Awareness (Social Media)
- Changes to Election Law in NY
- Combating Mis- & Dis-information

Why come to regional training?

- Get hands-on experience and build skills for the 2026 election
- Learn how to strengthen your League's impact
- Connect with other League members and State League leaders.

[Register Here by April 3rd](#)



The Rev. Jesse Jackson leads a group of Franklin High School students and others toward Hudson Avenue in 1989.

Rochester Democrat And Chronicle Staff File Photo

Honoring Reverend Jesse Jackson

Champion of Civil Rights and Economic Empowerment

Reverend Jesse Jackson emerged as a prominent leader in the civil rights movement, dedicating his life to advancing economic justice and equal opportunity. As the founder of Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity), Jackson concentrated on uplifting marginalized communities by advocating for increased job opportunities, supporting Black-owned businesses, and promoting economic justice through peaceful negotiations and strategic boycotts. Central to his mission was the commitment to voter registration, especially for individuals who had historically been excluded from both the political process and economic progress.

Expanding the Electorate: The National Rainbow Coalition

Jackson's presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988, organized under the National Rainbow Coalition, united a diverse range of groups in pursuit of greater political representation. These efforts resulted in the registration of millions of new voters. Political analysts credit Jackson's work with reshaping American politics by demonstrating that communities previously overlooked by mainstream campaigns were eager to participate when engaged directly and thoughtfully.

Principles for Lasting Civic Engagement

At the heart of Jackson's philosophy was the belief in meeting people where they are, eliminating barriers to participation, and cultivating civic habits that endure beyond election day. These guiding principles remain central to effective voter engagement efforts.

Submitted by Stephanie Watson

Introducing New LWV-RMA Members

Starting this month The Voter will offer new members an opportunity to introduce themselves. During January the following new members joined us:

Connor Jane O'Brien: I am retired from federal service. I joined the LWV because I am active in a number of community groups and voting is the key to so much progress. I want to help promote our democracy and increase participation, voter access, and meaningful representation. I hope to learn much from this vibrant group. Energetic people and chocolate make me smile.

Mary Pietrzykowski: I am married with three children and two grandchildren. My professional life focused on early childhood education. I was a Program Director at a local childcare center, and then an elementary school teacher. I currently serve as Chair of St. Paul's Episcopal Church Outreach Council. I am a long time volunteer with Brighton Library's Partners in Reading Seniors Program (PIRS).

Amanda Sharp: I joined the LWV to serve my community, support democracy, and meet other like-minded folks. I work in higher education and consider myself a life-long learner. I'm an avid reader, participate in a bowling league with my husband, and love watching television with our tuxedo cats: Oscar and Rizzo. I also volunteer with Lollypop Farm Professionals. I often send cards to colleagues and friends featuring my hand lettering. I think a personalized piece of physical mail makes the recipient feel extra special.

Also joining in January were: Kathy Serio, Elizabeth Coffey, Jamie Feather and Kathy Gibbs.

Introducing: Nancy Koch

In January 1975 Nancy Koch saw a notice for a League of Women Voters meeting and decided to attend. That decision led her to meet people who became life-long friends whose company she continues to enjoy. Nancy now joins the remarkable group of 50-year members of LWV-RMA. Some of Nancy's memories of her league activities include:

- Unit meetings were held monthly in neighborhoods to discuss very local issues and come to consensus on League issues. Study groups would dig deep into League topics and plan the monthly general League meetings to share that information.
- In April 1988, LWV-RMA sponsored a debate between Reverend Jesse Jackson, Senator Al Gore and Governor Michael Dukakis who were campaigning for the Democratic Presidential nomination. The event was at the Eastman Theater and televised nationally. (www.c-span.org/program/public-affairs-event/democratic-candidates-debate/1417)
- The Fair Election Practices Committee (FEPC), which she chaired for several years, encouraged candidates to sign pledges that their advertisements would be honest. Peer pressure among the candidates and fear of negative publicity led many to participate. Complaints about unfair printed materials were investigated and press statements issued if warranted.

Nancy continues to be an active advocate for democracy. She is organizing a "senior friendly" No Kings event for Saturday March 28. When details are available they will be posted on LWV-RMA social media.



Outreach to New Americans Committee Update

The Outreach to New Americans Committee (ONAC) met twice in February to begin planning our work for 2026. We received a grant for \$750 from LWVUS to promote voter registration and voting with New Americans. We plan to create signage and other materials in several languages common among the New Americans in the Rochester Metro Area such as Nepali, Somali, Arabic, and Spanish. We also will pilot several short videos in at least one of these languages to reach New Americans on social media platforms where they are already engaged. And we are pleased to say that we recruited 5 new members for our committee in the past month. An exciting 2026 ahead!

Submitted by Evelyn Jennings



Government Advocacy Update

On February 19, the LWV-RMA Governmental Advocacy Committee met via Zoom to prepare for upcoming meetings with NYS lawmakers. Members reached consensus to focus on voting rights and protections as proposed by the LWVNYS, as well as on our ongoing campaign to seek voting access for prisoners who are eligible to vote.

Voter Services Update

As we inch closer to spring (keep the faith, it's coming), voter registration events are being planned. We will be tabling for two events at the Third Presbyterian Church on February 28: the church's Dining Room Ministry and at a presentation being sponsored by LWV-RMA on the suffragist Alice Paul. Other settings in March will include libraries, churches, RIT and the No Kings Rally on March 28. More events will likely be added.

Several new members and volunteers have expressed an interest in working with us. Registration events will be announced via email with instructions for volunteering. Experienced volunteers will work with you and provide hands-on training to supplement our website resources (https://www.lwv-rma.org/voter_services.php). We welcome you all and look forward to meeting you.

A common question we hear at events, regardless of the setting, is how to get information on what candidates stand for. In response, we distribute palm cards with QR codes for Vote411.org, the League's website for this information in addition to other election-related information. Our "My Vote is My Power" bracelet with the Vote 411 address is popular as well.

At our monthly meeting, the team discussed changes to US Postal Service postmark policies and the need to educate voters about mailing ballots earlier than in the past. Our New York State and United States Leagues continue to monitor changes in voter registration and election policies and provide guidance to local Leagues.

The Voter Services team meets via Zoom on the 4th Thursday of the month from 5:00 - 6:30 P.M. An agenda is sent prior to the meeting and minutes are sent afterward. If you would like to join the group to learn more about our work, we invite you to attend one of our meetings. Please contact us at VoterServices@lwv-rma.org for information. We look forward to welcoming you!

Submitted by Deborah Gordon



Naturalizations

The honorable Elizabeth Wolford presided over the naturalization of 30 new citizens on Tuesday, February 17 at the United States Courthouse on State Street! The League of Women Voters was represented by Barbara Murphy, Anita Hawkins, and Margret Roberts. Four new citizens were registered to vote at the ceremony.

Submitted by Margret Roberts

The League's Nonpartisan Legacy* - Guest Column by Patricia A. Nugent

Reprinted from the *Daily Gazette*, Schenectady, NY

I recently pitched League of Women Voters membership to a millennial lamenting how powerless he felt in this political climate. He forcefully replied, "It's impossible to be nonpartisan these days! That's totally unrealistic!" It's true that our hyper-partisan culture has gotten progressively worse over the last decade, and nonpartisanship may be viewed with suspicion by both sides. I'm frequently challenged by people questioning how I, an outspoken feminist, can pursue women's rights within the confines of the League's nonpartisan mandate when one party's record is verifiably less favorable to women's equality than the other. After the last federal election, a friend indignantly texted, "How can the League remain nonpartisan when states are toying with executing women who have abortions? We can't stand on the sidelines!"

I agree – we can't. And we don't. What is not well understood is that the League is a highly political organization, advocating for policies and legislation that advance an inclusive democracy – no matter which party supports or opposes them. We chase the cause and not the actors, not supporting or opposing political parties or candidates. Instead, we support or resist political actions. Admittedly, this can get confusing when party lines are drawn around issues, creating the potential to offend either political party at any given juncture.

A biography of Alice Paul, *Claiming Power* by J.D. Zahniser and Amelia R. Fry, has deepened my understanding of the League's nonpartisan roots: Alice was one of the leaders who took women's suffrage over the finish line to become the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The book traces Alice's feminist training in London under Emmeline Pankhurst to the streets of Washington D.C. Originally a leader in the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), she then formed a competing organization to engage in more militant strategies to secure women's voting rights. She eventually founded the National Woman's Party (NWP), with the goals of holding the party in power responsible for the roadblocks to suffrage and withholding support from any party that didn't support suffrage. Since a Democratic president and Congress stood in the way of women's voting rights, Alice's organization launched full-scale opposition to all Democratic candidates in 1916 whether or not they individually supported women's suffrage. In other words, she held the whole party responsible, no matter how individual politicians voted. She insisted it was not a partisan act – she would have gone after any party standing in the way. Women of both parties joined her picket lines in front of President Wilson's White House.

The president of NAWSA, Carrie Chapman Catt, was horrified by NWP's tactics. Suffrage had always been a nonpartisan cause, and NAWSA aligned itself with pro-suffrage politicians of both parties. Being nonpartisan was important to the movement because partisan politics was considered "dirty business," rendering women "unfeminine." (*Heaven forbid!*) And NAWSA had suffered repercussions in the 1890s after aligning with a political party (Populist) that later faltered. Catt did, however, publicize each candidate's position on suffrage and "recommended" suffrage candidates to voters.

This was not the first time, nor the last, a social movement split due to a difference in strategy. Single-minded in their goal to secure the vote for women, activities of both groups bordered on partisanship at various times. The cause overrode party and candidate.

Catt went on to found the League in 1920 to help women use their right to vote in their own self-interest. Three years later, recognizing that voting rights were not enough to ensure fair and equal treatment of women in our nation, Alice Paul proposed the still-elusive 24-word Equal Rights Amendment.

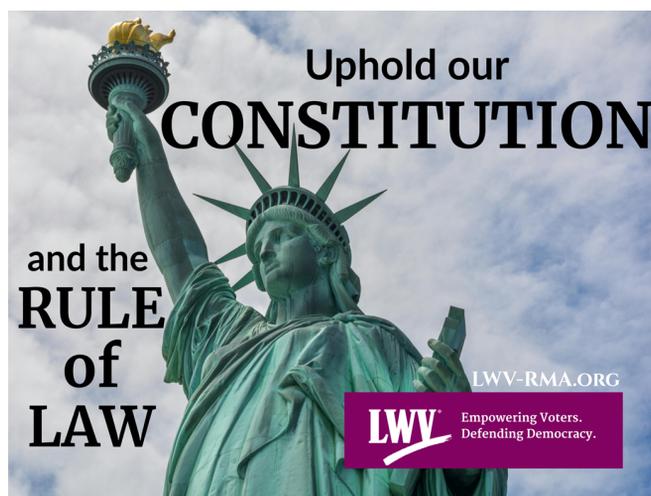
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Through more than one century of advocacy, the League has remained bound by its nonpartisan mandate – stricter now than our foremothers' interpretation. While members might have personal partisan affiliations, when serving in an official capacity, they must honor their obligation to nonpartisanship in words and deeds. It's what makes the League credible and sustainable through shifting partisan alliances.

The League proves people can work together on a mutual goal, such as women's equality, regardless of political affiliation. Those who want to work together to build a more-inclusive democracy, regardless of party or gender, should join their local League of Women Voters.

*Patricia A. Nugent is past president of the Saratoga County League of Women Voters and is currently active in their Women's Rights Action Coalition. She is the author of the anthology *Before They Were Our Mothers: Voices of Women Born Before Rosie Started Riveting* and the play *The Stone that Started the Ripple*. On February 28, Patricia presented "Deeds, Not Words" for LWV-RMA about Alice Paul's campaign strategies.



Join a No Kings Rally on March 28

The LWVUS has declared that we are experiencing a Constitutional Crisis and that defending the Constitution is a non-partisan activity. Members are encouraged to peacefully demonstrate and are free to advertise their League membership via their clothing and pins. Our lawn signs are also great for carrying at a demonstration or displaying in a window. And they are only \$8.

Pay online and we'll deliver it by putting it in your yard.

Calendar

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](#).

Join First Friday for social time at I Square in Irondequoit - 400 Bakers Park, Rochester, NY 14617 - at 11:30 A.M. on the first Friday of each month. We gather in the space behind the partition (look for our sign) for lunch and discussion. Come when you can, leave when you must. We share ideas for how the League can make democracy work and discuss the news to parse what it all means. It's always comforting to be surrounded by League friends who are committed to empowering voters and protecting democracy. Join the fun!

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If you have comments, article suggestions or pictures to share please send them to micketeditor@gmail.com.

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, justice 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.

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Join the League Today!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ Email _____

Check Amount: _____

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 DUES:

Dues are payable to LWVUS. The link on LWV-RMA.org 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.