

TheVOTER



Upcoming Events

- Tuesday, May 12
Zoom Presentation:
Combating Misinformation on Social Media Through Crowdchecking
 - Wednesday, May 27
Zoom Presentation:
Recognizing Misinformation in Campaign Materials
 - Thursday, June 11:
Annual Membership Meeting
Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word
- See Page 3 for details

Youth Outreach Committee Meeting

A number of members have expressed an interest in working with young people to ensure they are registered and prepared to vote. While much of that activity will take place in the fall, the time for planning is now.

If you are interested in joining a team to develop and execute a plan for this work, please register here link to join us on Zoom on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 from 6:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. Register here:

[Youth Outreach Meeting](#)

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President's Letter

Proportional Ranked Choice Voting in Multi-Winner Elections as an Antidote to Voter Suppression in Newburgh, NY

Most towns in NY are governed by town boards, and most town boards are elected at-large. If there are two openings on the town board, each voter gets two votes and the two candidates getting the most votes are the winners. This simple system can result in severe polarization, where the interests of minority groups are totally neglected.

A recent case in the Town of Newburgh in Orange County highlighted how this system of governance has resulted in unresponsive government. In 2024, the Town of Newburgh was 60% White, 25% Black and 15% Latino. Despite the large number of people of color, the town board has always been exclusively White and unresponsive to the needs of Black and Latino residents. For example, Newburgh is home to the Danskammer power plant, the third largest polluter in the state of NY. In 2011, expansion of the plant was proposed. All the downwind communities opposed it, but the town of Newburgh supported it, ignoring the impact on the immediate neighbors of the plant, the Black residents of Newburgh. In the spring of 2022 when 60 asylum seekers arrived in Newburgh courtesy of the state of Texas and the city of New York, the town board attempted to prevent housing them in the town and used false rumors about them to raise funds for Republican candidates.

In 2024 a group of Black and Latino voters sued the town under the John Lewis Voting Rights Act for using the at-large voting method to weaken the plaintiffs' political power. The math is easy to understand: as long as whites retain a majority, they can always outvote people of color. White politicians don't need votes from people of color to win, and they do not seek them. In March the town settled with the plaintiffs, agreeing to switch to the use of proportional Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). How does proportional RCV overcome the use of at-large representation? When voters rank their choices, each voter's first choice counts more than other voters' second choice. In this way, any substantial minority group is likely to be able to win some representation, approximately proportional to their share of the population.

This is likely to be an important precedent in New York. How many towns have substantial minority populations (be it racial, ethnic, or political) who have not been able to win representation on town boards? Ranked Choice Voting ensures that every voter's preferences are reflected in the election outcome; and that's fair. I think we can use this to win support and allay opposition to the adoption of RCV both locally and statewide.

Here's a video which explains how votes are tallied in proportional RCV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INxwMdi8OWw>

Barbara Grosh president@lww-rma.org

Upcoming Events:

Forum: Combating Misinformation on Social Media Through Crowdchecking

Tuesday, May 12, 2026
Via Zoom
6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Register Here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWV051226>

Adam Shenxiong Li is a third-year Ph.D. student at the Simon Business School, University of Rochester. His research, supervised by Professor Huaxia Rui, focuses on misinformation on social media platforms and crowd-based fact-checking mechanisms. His work explores how online communities can be leveraged to identify and counter the spread of false information in digital environments.

Forum: Recognizing Misinformation in Campaign Materials

Wednesday, May 27, 2026
Via Zoom
6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Register Here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWV052726>

Presented by RIT Associate Professor of Political Science, Sarah Burns. She will discuss common tactics used to mislead the public, as well as fact-checking methods.

School Board and Budget Elections are May 19, 2026.

Remember to Vote.



Annual Members Meeting

Thursday, June 11, 2026, 5 P.M. to 7 P.M.

Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word, 597 East Avenue, Rochester NY
Join us for dinner, elections, celebrations, and planning for next year.

Details including registration link will be sent via email in May.

Voter Services Update

April was busy for Voter Services with 6 registration events. Continuing our efforts to engage low turnout and underserved communities, we began with offering voter services at the Third Presbyterian Church Food Cupboard, and visited their Dining Room Ministry later in the month. Other venues included Seneca Towers, which provides affordable housing for those 55 years and older, and House of Mercy, which is a homeless shelter in Rochester offering a variety of services. Our volunteers also tabled at the Dr. Deborah Ellerbe Health Fair at the Montgomery Neighborhood Center in Rochester. This yearly event promotes good health and offers information on related resources.

On April 24, we participated in "Brock the Vote," a voter registration drive in Brockport that included an '80s and '90s dance party! This was a family-focused event with children's activities and snacks provided.

As the primary election season approaches, our efforts are also focusing on getting out the vote (GOTV). We know that, typically, a relatively small percentage of the citizens we help to register cast a ballot; therefore, this work is very important. The Monroe County Board of Elections will certify the primary ballot on April 30, 2026. That information will help us determine where to concentrate our efforts.

Here are a few key dates to be aware of:

- June 8 is the last day for the Board of Elections to receive change of address forms for already-registered voters before the June 23 primary.
- June 9 is the last day to register to vote or change your address on a current registration for village elections which will be held on June 16.

We welcome all who may be interested in volunteering for Voter Services events. Please contact us at VoterServices@LWV-RMA.org to learn more.

Submitted by Cathy Kane and Deb Gordon



Looking for Voter Services Team Chairperson(s)!

Voter Services is at the heart of the League's mission to support voters and defend democracy. This work involves two major activities: voter registration and getting out the vote (GOTV). The chairperson(s) of the team coordinate voter registration and community events throughout the year. They also coordinate GOTV activities including distribution of non partisan literature in neighborhoods or at community events. Monthly team meetings are led by the chair(s).

LWV-RMA's current co-chairs (Deb Gordon and Cathy Kane) have agreed to remain chairs through 2026 but want to identify a new chair(s) soon so they can facilitate a smooth transition for the team.

If your passion is supporting voters, please consider stepping up to lead (or help lead) this team. If you are interested and would like to learn more, please contact us at VoterServices@LWV-RMA.org.

Submitted by Deb Gordon and Cathy Kane

April Forum: Bridging the Gap between Voting and Accountability

Approximately 40 people attended a forum sponsored by LWV-RMA on Thursday, April 16 at the Irondequoit Town Library. (See photo below.) The forum was moderated by League President Barbara Grosh. Presenting at the forum were:

- Jacob Gilbert-Mahoney: Governor's Finger Lakes Regional Representative
- Zachary Pike: Assistant NYS Attorney General
- Alex Hipolito: Finger Lakes Regional Director, NYS Comptroller's Office
- Rachel Barnhart: Monroe County Legislator, 17th District
- Patrick Beath: City of Rochester Corporate Council

The presentations focused on the roles and responsibilities of the elected officials of the offices represented. The attendees indicated that the forum provided timely and useful information. A link to the recording of the forum will be posted next month.

Thank you to the members of the Civic Education Forum team who coordinated this inaugural event: Valerie O'Hare, Alison O'Neil, and Katherine Smith.

Submitted by Mary Micket



Outreach to New Americans Committee

The Outreach to New Americans Committee (ONAC) has been working hard this month to design some materials to share with new citizens that will be more inclusive. We designed the "Welcome" poster in multiple languages that is on the front page of this issue of the Voter. It will be used for ONAC and naturalization ceremony tables.

We have also designed an easy-to-read pamphlet that contains all the basic information a new citizen needs to register and get out to vote. We hope these materials will help new citizens feel more welcome and less overwhelmed with the complexity of the voting process. This month ONAC members tabled at the SEIU Funds Day at Strong Memorial Hospital on April 9 and tabled and gave a short presentation on voting at the Church of the Ascension Coffee Hour on Sunday, April 26.

Submitted by Evelyn Jennings NewAmericansOutreach@LWV-RMA.org

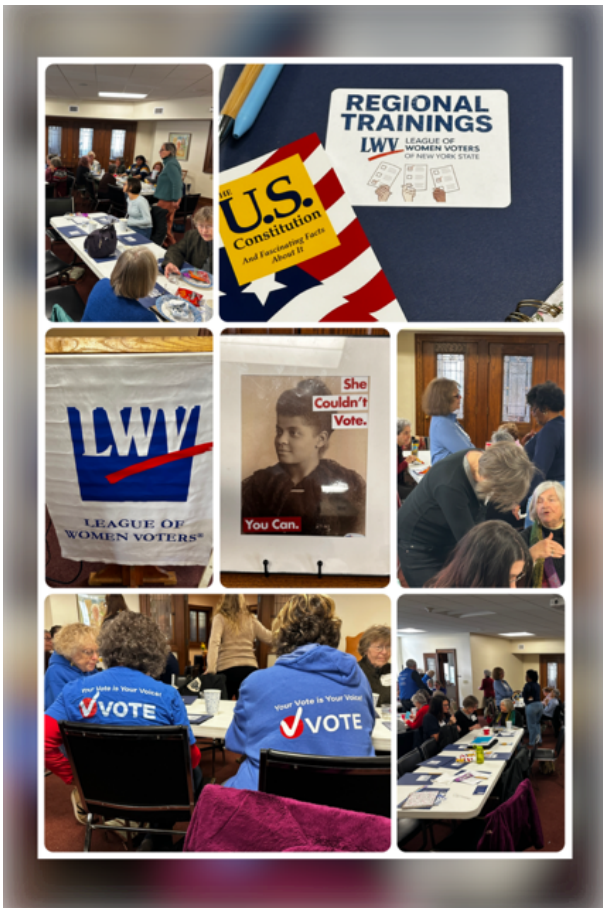
League of Women Voters of New York State Regional Training

The New York State League presented a full day regional training on April 11 at Third Presbyterian Church. The following topics were addressed at a full-house gathering of League members from chapters throughout western New York.

“Unite and Rise: How the League Is Evolving and Taking Action” is the initiative to activate 8.5 million voters nationally through civic engagement. This number represents 3.5% of the population, determined to be the proportion of people that can effect political change.

Materials provided in the presentation included:

- “Why Vote” Tools
- Current Crisis – Take Democracy Back
- Unite and Rise: 8.5 Mobilization Goals
- Four Pillars of Unite and Rise 8.5
 - Legal and Political Advocacy
 - Public Mobilization and Coalition Building
 - Civic Education and Engagement
 - Democracy Resilience



Specific actions that we can take were presented in a series of Playbooks:

- Shifting Power Narratives
- Holding Power Accountable
- Building Power through Partnership
- Deepening Electoral Power

The presentation was full of timely, useful information.

Submitted by Pat Willis

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!

LWVNYS Training Workshops

Doing the Work: Embedding DEI throughout Our Organization.

I participated in this workshop. We were led in a discussion of how to diversify League and Board membership based on understanding practices, traditions, and requirements. Because we have been doing our work for more than 100 years, we sometimes treat traditions and practice as requirements. Traditions and practices are just the ways we do things and they can be examined if we want to develop more inclusive participation that better represents our communities. If we can step back and reassess, we will have a stronger League that will be better able to address our Constitutional crisis.

We need to go outside our silos and reach digital users, youth, and other communities that have not always been included. The League will need to partner with community-based organizations so that we all can get the most out of our energy and time. Our diverse communities must come together if we are all to achieve our mutual goals.

The “Why Vote” Initiative

This initiative is designed “to increase voting rates in low-income communities in 2020 and beyond”. We need to become aware of and understand the many different experiences that people may have had that inhibit their participation in voting. These experiences may range from persecution of immigrants, negative public services encounters, disparaging health providers and others. We need to accept the relevance of experiences that destroy trust in public institutions because they have real and significant impact on how people perceive political activity.

Our Rochester Metropolitan Area League uses this kind of information in our Voter Services, Outreach to New Citizens, and Forums committees. We are currently expanding and strengthening our efforts in all these areas.

Submitted by Pat Willis

New Members Joining in March

Terry Jahnke

I have joined the LWV due to my significant concerns regarding the impact of the current administration on our democracy. I believe that hope remains if we can uphold free and fair elections. I am eager to contribute to this objective alongside the LWV. I am a retired computer professional with a variety of hobbies, including sewing, gardening, and knitting. My four-year-old granddaughter brings me immense joy!

Sandy Marafino

My husband and I moved here from Seattle, Washington about 7 years ago. I joined the League because I'm very concerned about the direction our country might be headed in and I want to do my part to hopefully turn things around. My hobbies include knitting, reading, and making jewelry.

Also joining during March were Alison O'Neil, Molly Gildea, Susan Gilday, and Deborah Muratore.

Strengthening Our League's Identity: Virtual Regional Training Workshop

League of Women Voters New York State presented a zoom workshop on March 31. The objective was to review standards that will ensure League messaging and format are consistent, in order to maintain our brand identity. It was helpful to become more aware of the importance of our brand identity and its impact on members as well as communities that we hope to include as we work in collaboration.

The presenters restated the following for the League:

Mission: Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

Vision: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

Value: We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

The presentation reviewed specific formatting including our logo, color combinations, and font which should be used in materials given to the public.

Xavia Francis, Program and Office Coordinator of League of Women Voters of New York State presented the information. The presentation may be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/apy00XWkbcU>

Submitted by Pat Willis



Naturalizations

On April 7, 37 applicants were naturalized at RIT and 12 citizens registered to vote. Katherine Smith, Anita Hawkins and Elizabeth Coffey volunteered at that event.

Eighteen new citizens took the oath of allegiance at the Federal Building on Tuesday, April 21. The Honorable Mark Pedersen presided. Connor O'Brien and Margaret Supinski registered 13 new voters.

Many thanks to the volunteers at both events. (See photo above)

Submitted by Margret Roberts

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

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Editor, Mary Micket; Graphic Editor, Judy Wadsworth; Layout/Design, David Newman; Proof readers, Barbara Grosh, Pat Willis, Mary Hussong-Kallen

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.

Board of Directors:

President	Barbara Grosh (25-26)
Vice President	Julie Burns (25-26)
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Secretary	Marla Miller (25-27)
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Director	Mary Micket (25-27)
Director	Pat Willis (25-26)
Director	Donna Gardner (25-26)
Director	Stephanie Watson (25-27)
Director	Karen Morris (24-26)

Committee Contacts

President: Barbara Grosh

President@LWV-RMA.org

Book Club: Judy Weinstein

Bookclub@LWV-RMA.org

Communications: Stephanie Watson

Communications@LWV-RMA.org

Naturalization: Margret Roberts

Naturalizations@lww-rma.org

Advocacy: Barb Murphy / Scott Forsyth

Advocacy@LWV-RMA.org

Membership: Kim Byers

Membership@LWV-RMA.org

Nominating:

Nominations@LWV-RMA.org

Programs: Barbara Grosh

President@LWV-RMA.org

Vote411: Marla Miller

Vote411@LWV-RMA.org

Voter Services: Deb Gordon / Cathy Kane

VoterServices@LWV-RMA.org

Criminal Justice Reform: Laurene Jennings

Justice@LWV-RMA.org

New Americans Outreach: Evelyn Jennings

NewAmericansOutreach@LWV-RMA.org

DEI+Justice: Julie Burns

VP@LWV-RMA.org

Join the League Today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

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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 LWNYS.

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.