



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

STATE BOARD REPORT

February 2016

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LWVNJ President's Letter
Nancy Hedinger, President

SBR – February 2016

Dear Presidents and Members,

The fluctuating weather and budding crocus remind us that spring is fast approaching. Our Annual Appeal is wrapping up as local Leagues and Board members conclude their Callathon commitments and we thank all who participated in this critical effort. As you know, this is our biggest fundraiser and your generosity and that of our members support our programming, statewide work, and talented staff.

In the January SBR, I informed our members that LWVUS and the LWVNJ Board have decided to jointly focus their energy on “making democracy work” efforts in 2016. To that end, we will be participating in Vote411, an LWVUS initiative that provides online access to election and candidate information throughout the country. It answers questions about candidate qualifications, the ballot, polling places and more. LWVUS anticipates that three million people will use the site in 2016. Look for more information on Vote411 in this SBR. I will be scheduling a call with local League presidents to discuss opportunities for your League to participate in this exciting endeavor. Look for my doodle poll later this week!

Otherwise, please save the date for our “Making Democracy Work” cocktail reception and spring workshops. The cocktail reception will be held on Friday, May 6th at the Madison Hotel in Morristown. Spring workshops will be on May 7th in a location nearby to be announced. The Madison Hotel is blocking off rooms for those who want to avoid driving after the reception or just want a good night's rest before a busy day of workshops. I hope you will all consider joining us for a fun weekend of League fellowship and learning.

While you're marking your calendars, consider joining us at LWVUS Convention 2016, which will be in Washington, DC from June 16 – 19. More information can be found at lww.org. Carole Connors, our LWVNJ representative on the LWVUS Lobby Corps, has offered to schedule meetings with our New Jersey Representatives and Senators for Lobby Day on June 16th.

I am looking forward to gearing up for a busy spring and am excited about all that lies ahead for our organization as we work together.

In League,



2015-2017 Expanded Board List

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LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting Key Decisions

Meeting held: Saturday, February 13, 2016

League of Women Voters of New Jersey Key Decisions

1. The LWVNJ board went through the LWVUS Program Planning process with Ed Gracely, Program V.P. facilitating. Our consensus was to support the LWVUS recommended program focus, Making Democracy Work for the 2016-2018 biennium. Additionally, LWVNJ has asked LWVUS to provide us with materials and language to help deal with the appearance of partisanship when we support what appear to be partisan public policies.
2. The Board approved joining the Anti-Poverty Network (APN). Membership fee is \$50. Jesse Burns and Sandy Matsen will collaborate with them on voting issues for those living below the poverty line.
3. A motion to add the Appendix *Division of Duties* to the LWVNJ Financial Policies and Procedures manual was carried.
4. A motion to require the E.D. to notify the President and Treasurer when a budget line has been exceeded by \$500 and get approval before approving further expenses from that budget line was carried. This will be added to the LWVNJ Policies and Procedures Manual.

League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund Key Decisions

1. A motion to add the Appendix, *Division of Duties* to the LWVNJ EF Financial Policies and Procedures manual was carried.
2. A motion to require the E.D. to notify the President and Treasurer when a budget line has been exceeded by \$500 and get approval before approving further expenses from that budget line was carried. This will be added to the LWVNJ EF Policies and Procedures Manual.

Date of the Next LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting: Saturday, March 12, 2016

Pre-Board Briefings Due: Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Opportunities to Thrive in 2016

Vote411 Opportunities: Vote411 is accessed by thousands in your community every election season, but because we are not participating in this program offered by LWVUS, New Jersey residents DO NOT find the information needed. We want to change that in time for the November General Election.

About VOTE411.org: Launched by the League of Women Voters of the United States Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public concerning the election process, including access to online voter guides.

Participation in VOTE411 is not free. Local and state Leagues buy into the system in order to access all VOTE411 has to offer. **However, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey will purchase VOTE411 for our local Leagues interested in participating!**

Local Leagues should use VOTE411 to publish local (board of education, council, county clerk, and other town and county races) voters guides. No other organization is publishing information about local candidates and this will really bring your local League greater visibility.

Before buying into VOTE411, we would like to gauge local League interest. Participation would entail volunteers who are willing to learn the online system (with help from LWVUS and LWVNJ) and put the time into creating the online voter guides. LWVNJ President Nancy Hedinger will be scheduling a conference call to discuss VOTE411 and your League's interest.

Reminder Moderator Trainings: Offering balanced, nonpartisan educational forums and debates helps achieve the League's core mission. To ensure an informed electorate and continuing civil discourse in the political arena, we need to train not only moderators, but League leaders and members to effectively share this informed model of civic engagement with the community. We would like to empower our local League leaders and voter service team members to effectively consult on organizing forums and debates with community civic groups. We propose to expand Moderator training opportunities throughout the state to include experienced moderators and local League members as well as potential new moderators. To do that, LWVNJ will provide trainers and materials, but we need local Leagues to volunteer to host i.e. provide a site. **One LL has already volunteered to host a training – and we are looking for a few more local Leagues to volunteer to hold trainings in March, April, and May! Please contact VP of Voters Service Dawn Clarke at clarkeda@comcast.net.**

Connecting the League with Young Adults

Meet the Young People's Network

In Case You Missed It: Leadership members of the Young People's Network have been blogging about their involvement in the League. These blogs have been shared widely to help raise awareness of YPN and to attract like-minded young people to leadership roles in the League. They can be found here and more are still being added: <https://lwvnj.wordpress.com/>

Eagleton Partnership

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey's Young People's Network is partnering with the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University to pilot a workshop on running for office. The workshop is titled "RU Running?" and has been described by Rutgers as follows:

"An initiative of the Youth Political Participation Program at Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics, RU Running? is a training for politically interested college students considering running for public office. Grounded in our research on young elected leaders and our demonstrated success at mobilizing young adults and training citizens to run for office, RU Running? promises to be a model for colleges and universities throughout New Jersey and nationwide..."

The workshop will include three core components: Connecting with young adults holding elected public office, accessing the NJ political system to run for office, and learning the key elements of a successful campaign. It will be based on the Center for American Women in Politics' (CAWP) curriculum but will be open to both men and women.

If the pilot is successful, Rutgers hopes to replicate it in the future and invite students from other NJ colleges— including community colleges—to participate in the program. YPN is enthusiastic about this opportunity for two primary reasons:

1. The mission and goals of the Eagleton Institute and LWVNJ are very aligned, and this particular opportunity forwards the shared goal of engaging and educating young people about NJ politics.
2. Eagleton has a strong brand, and this is a way to build awareness of LWVNJ and YPN in the Rutgers and other college communities.

Strategic Planning

On a recent committee call, YPN recognized the need to build its capacity and delegate

responsibilities in order to more effectively build a network of young people engaged in LWVNJ. The YPN committee will meet to develop a strategic plan that lays out our vision and goals as well as benchmarks over the next five years to achieve those goals.

As part of the planning process, we'll be thinking through the ways in which YPN can forward the dual mission of improving youth political participation in NJ and expanding the involvement of young people in LWVNJ. We will consider how YPN can facilitate engagement of interested young people at the present and also shepherd a next generation of LWVNJ members by building awareness of its important work and value as a nonpartisan organization.

Board members and local league presidents were invited to submit thoughts and ideas to inform our strategic plan. We look forward to sharing our proposed plan in the near future.

Advocacy Report

Offshore Drilling

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey was well represented Jan 31 at a rally in Asbury Park concerning a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management proposal to allow exploration for offshore drilling in the Atlantic.

Pay Equity Bill

The League testified in support of S992, the NJ Pay Equity Act—equal pay for equal work. The legislation amends the Law Against Discrimination to give additional tools to combat pay discrimination. Despite national legislation such as the Lilly Ledbetter Act of 2009, women in New Jersey still earn 80 cents on the dollar. The bill passed the Senate and we expect it to be up in the Assembly before the budget break.

Action before budget break

Committee hearings on legislation will be held the first two weeks of March, with full agendas. The final Senate and Assembly voting sessions before the budget break are on March 14. As a rule there are only occasional committee hearings during the time the legislature is examining the proposed FY17 budget and currently there are no other committee hearings scheduled before May 19.

Budget Season

Governor Christie presented his FY17 budget February 16. Both the Senate and Assembly hold public hearings on the budget. The Senate public hearings are March 15 and 22. The Assembly public hearings are March 9, 16 and 21. The time, locations and registration information can be found at www.njleg.state.nj.us.

The budget committees in both houses will then hold departmental budget hearings. The Fiscal Policy Committee will be examining the budget proposals and preparing comments based on our Tax and Spending Policy

Save the Dates: Making Democracy Work Awards and Spring Workshops

Mark your calendars to join us at the Madison Hotel in Morristown, NJ the evening of Friday, May 6, 2016 for the Making Democracy Work awards and cocktail reception! Building on last year's successful reception, we will honor individuals for their outstanding achievements improving our democracy. We are reserving a block of discounted rooms so our guests can spend the evening at the hotel and join us the next day Saturday, May 7, 2016 for spring workshops. The workshops will be held close by – more information coming soon!

New Resource Available to League Members: Membership Handbook

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is pleased to offer this [“Handbook for Members”](#) to our local Leagues. The handbook serves as a welcome to the League and a brief orientation for new members.

2016 New Jersey Citizen's Guide to Government Now Available

We are happy to announce the 2016 New Jersey Citizen's Guide has arrived and is ready to be shipped! [Place your orders using this form.](#)

Celebrating 10 Years of Service

Pat Thompson, beloved and dedicated employee of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey is celebrating her 10 year work anniversary with the League this February! For a decade, Pat has been available to meet the needs of our members, to coordinate moderators, and to keep our state office building beautiful. We are a better organization because of her service. If you would like to honor Pat with a donation, please mail a check to LWVNJ, 204 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608 and place “In Honor of Pat” in the memo line.

LWVNJ CALENDAR
Upcoming Events 2016

Please note that dates are subject to change. If you have any questions, please contact the LWVNJ office at contact@lwnj.org or 609-394-3303.

March 2016

- Women's History Month (PR opportunity)
- March 2: PBBs due
- March 7: Callathon Packets Due Back
- March 8: International Women's Day (PR opportunity)
- March 12: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Mid-March Sunshine Week (PR opportunity)
- March 30: PBBs for April meeting due

April 2016

- Apr. 9: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Apr. 19-25: National Volunteer Week (PR opportunity)
- Apr. 22: Earth Day (PR opportunity)
- Apr. 27: PBBs for May meeting due

May 2016

- May 1: Law Day (PR opportunity)
- May 6: Making Democracy Work Awards Cocktail Reception
- May 7: LWVNJ Spring Forum
- May 9: Advocacy Appeal Sent

June 2016

- June 1: PBBs due
- June 11: LWVNJ/EF Board meeting
- **June 16 – 19: LWVUS Convention 2016**
- June 29: PBBs for July meeting due

July 2016

- July 9: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting

August 2016

- Aug. 3: PBBs due
- Aug. 13: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Aug. 26: Women's Equality Day

September 2016

- Sept. 7: PBBs due
- Sept. 17: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Sept 24 – 25: Statewide Voter Registration Weekend
- Sept 28: PBBs for October meeting due

October 2016

- Oct 2 – 4: Rosh Hashanah
- Oct. 8: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Oct. 8: Fall Forum and Workshops
- Oct. 11 – 12: Yom Kippur

November 2016

- Nov. 1: Annual Member Appeal begins
- Nov. 8: General Election Day
- Nov 9: PBBs due
- Nov. 19: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Nov 30: PBBs for December meeting due

December 2016

- Dec. 8: Annual Advocacy Meet & Greet
- Dec. 10: LWVNJ/EF Board meeting
- Dec. 23 – Jan. 2: Office Closed for the Holidays

Becoming a Welcoming League

Most of us think of ourselves as welcoming, and we usually are! But an organization also needs to operate in such a way that newcomers *feel* welcome and want to stay.

- It may take a while for an interested member to decide if the League is right for him or her, so asking (letting) them to volunteer for a project or two before committing and paying dues makes sense.
- Holding League meetings in a public place like a library or community center makes them more business-like and open to all. It also avoids the discomfort someone from a different economic level might feel going to a board member's home. We want to attract people from our whole community.
- Surveying a new member's issue and activity interests is important in keeping them engaged. When people are doing things that interest and challenge them just enough, they are most likely to thrive.
- New members often can benefit from having a buddy, a seasoned member who will remind them about meetings and offer to drive them there, sit with them, and answer their questions. One-on-one assistance helps new people acclimate quickly and comfortably.
- Leagues should hold an annual orientation program, with the new "[LWVNJ Membership Handbook](#)" as a guide. The more they understand the League and how they fit in, the more comfortable they will be.