



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW JERSEY

## ***STATE BOARD REPORT***

March 2016

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Dear Presidents and Members,

It is my great pleasure to announce the promotion of Jesse Burns to the position of Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. Jesse has been serving as the Interim E.D. since late summer, 2015. Prior to that, she served as the Director of Communications and Projects and staff liaison to the Young People's Network. Jesse also manages our internship program where she provides challenging educational opportunities while mentoring the League's future leaders. The Board of Directors of LWVNJ is thrilled Jesse has accepted the position. She has demonstrated time and again her commitment to the League's mission and to our membership and we look forward to a smooth transition.

I am also thrilled to announce our own Toni Zimmer, immediate past LWVNJ President, has been nominated to the Executive Board of the League of Woman Voters of the United States. Toni will serve as Board Secretary to our National affiliate when elected at LWVUS Convention 2016. The last time anyone from New Jersey served on the National Board was in 1990 when Sue Lederman, another former LWVNJ President, was elected President of LWVUS. This exciting news is one more reason why you may want to join us in Washington D.C. June 15 – 19!

Finally, though no less exciting, I want to invite you all to our *Making Democracy Work* Cocktail Reception and Awards Ceremony and our Spring Forum, *2016 and Beyond: Serving New Jersey Voters* on May 6 and 7 in Morristown. The cocktail reception provides a great opportunity to honor leaders in our state who strive to make democracy work every day, while enjoying the company of League members and friends in a relaxed social setting. The success of last year's event motivated us to extend this year's reception for an additional hour. More information about both the cocktail reception and the Spring Forum can be found in this SBR.

I am looking forward to our Presidents' Call on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 and 8:00 P.M. and March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 A.M. Dawn Clarke, VP Voter Service and Jesse Burns, E.D. will be on the calls to answer questions you may have about Vote 411. You will receive a meeting agenda with the call-in number later this week.

In League,



**2015-2017 Expanded Board List**

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**Off-Board**

**Sandra Matsen, Chair**  
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**Marlene Sincaglia, Chair**  
**Nominating Committee**  
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## **LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting Key Decisions**

**Meeting held: Saturday, March 12, 2016**

### **League of Women Voters of New Jersey**

1. Voted in favor of the Funds Preserving Task Force motion to direct the Finance Committee to continue to exam merging the Education Fund (501c.3) with LWVNJ (501c4) into one organization. This would simplify financial accounting and make member dues and donations tax deductible. There are already three other state Leagues that have done this successfully.
2. At the request of the Immigration Program Committee, voted to support A1254, the “Higher Education Citizenship Equality 16 Act” *which defines domicile for the purposes of qualifying U.S. citizen resident dependent students with uncertain points of parental domicile, for State student loans, grants, scholarships and undergraduate tuition rates.* This bill would provide for citizen students of undocumented parents to qualify for student loans, grants and scholarships. It also provides for citizen students to be able to establish residency according to the same rules that apply for other dependent citizen students whose parents are U.S. citizens.

### **League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund**

1. Agreed to fund Vote 411 for NJ and only those local Leagues that express interest in participating in the program for 2016-2017. Since there is a cost for each League, it is not fiscally prudent to pay for every local League if some may not want or be able to participate this inaugural year.
2. Voted to use raffle funds to underwrite our involvement in Vote 411. The cost will range from a minimum of \$2,500 for just NJ up to \$7,000 for NJ and all local Leagues.

### **Important New Voting Rules – Must Read!**

**IMPORTANT: 17 Year Old Registration:** All 17 year olds can now register to vote. Under previous rules 17 year olds had to turn 18 by the next election to register, but this is no longer true. Your League can start registering **all** 17 year olds immediately. They will be entered in the statewide database as “pending” and will be allowed to vote once they turn 18.

**New technology available at Motor Vehicles:** Motor Vehicles is offering a new way to register to vote. Now when New Jersey residents enter their local MVC they will use an electronic touchpad screen to conduct their MVC business. It will ask each user if they would like to register to vote. Users will sign the touchpad and their voter registration/change of address and electronic signature will be sent for verification to election officials.

**Reminder: 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.

**[Making Democracy Work Cocktail Reception and Awards](#)**

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund cordially invites you to the "Making Democracy Work" cocktail reception and awards ceremony on Friday, May 6, 2016, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm at the Madison Hotel in Morristown, NJ.

The evening will include a premium open bar, heavy hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and an awards ceremony.

The League will be presenting our prestigious "Making Democracy Work" award to honorees in celebration of their dedication to democracy.

***2016 Making Democracy Work  
Honorees***

**Michael Aron, NJTV**

**Ryan P. Haygood, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice**

**S. Nadia Hussain, The Andrew Goodman Foundation**

**Sandra Matsen, League of Women Voters of New Jersey**

**Myrna Pérez, Brennan Center for Justice**

Please join us in celebration of the League and of these worthy honorees. [Information about tickets and hotel arrangements \(rooms must be booked by April 6\) can be found here](#). We will be holding our spring forum, "2016 and Beyond: Serving New Jersey Voters" at the College of Saint Elizabeth the following day. A discounted price is available when you register for both events at the same time. More information about the spring forum can be found in this SBR. [Learn more and purchase tickets now](#). The RSVP deadline is April 25.

**Sponsorships opportunities are once again available for local Leagues. See below:**

***Making Democracy Work  
Local League Sponsorship Opportunity***

On Mother's Day weekend, May 6, 2016 we will celebrate ordinary citizens' extraordinary dedication to improving our democracy. These distinguished honorees will receive one of the League's highest honors, the "Making Democracy Work" award.

We will also celebrate the League, an organization built and sustained by a membership committed to making our government more transparent, our residents more engaged and informed, and our democracy more accessible. An organization built as a direct result of our foremothers' struggle to continue fighting for a place at the table in government, even after they won the right to vote.

We hope you will join us as we celebrate our foremothers and you, our current members, along with our distinguished awardees. We are offering an exclusive opportunity, only to local Leagues, to remember, recognize, or honor someone significant to your local League in our cocktail reception program.

Your League might like to memorialize a member recently passed that embodied League virtues and carried the spirit of the suffragists. Or celebrate your members that have been committed to Making Democracy Work for 50 years. Or maybe you would like to honor a great woman that you consider a foremother of our organization.

Your local League can honor anyone or anything of your choosing with a half page ad (7.5 wide x 4.75 tall) in the Making Democracy Work program book. The cost of \$200 will be used to keep the organization strong for years to come. This offer is only good for local Leagues and is normally \$500 for other supporters.

Please make checks payable to LWVNJ-EF, send to 204 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608 and write "local League ad" in the memo line. Email your completed ad to Jesse Burns, Executive Director at [jburns@lwnj.org](mailto:jburns@lwnj.org) by April 6, 2016. If you have questions, please contact Jesse Burns. Thank you for Making Democracy Work!

**[Spring Forum: 2016 and Beyond: Serving New Jersey Voters](#)**

Saturday, May 7, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm, the College of Saint Elizabeth, Morristown, NJ

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is in a unique position to combat New Jersey's historically low voter turnout. While we will see greater participation in this presidential election year, we want to ensure voter engagement continues in the years to follow. This forum will focus on League trainings to help your members better serve New Jersey voters and incorporate best practices into your voter education work.

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shauna Shames**

Dr. Shauna Shames, an Assistant Professor in the Political Science Department of Rutgers-Camden, is an expert in American political behavior, with a focus on race, gender, and politics. Dr. Shames has published and lectured widely on political inequality, marginalization, and gender politics. She has also published on child care policy, work/family conflict, abortion, feminism, gay and lesbian rights, and U.S. public opinion. Dr. Shames will provide us with insight into women's political participation, as voters and as candidates, the magnitude of political inequality in the U.S., and offer some solutions to improve our political system going forward.

**Workshop Sessions:** This forum will focus on providing training prior to the busy fall voter education season. Each participant will have the opportunity to attend 2 of the following trainings:

- **League Basics 101**
- **Targeting Low Voting Populations: Registration and Beyond**
- **Organizing Candidate Forums: Updating the Tried and True**
- **Vote411**

**[Register and learn more here](#) (remember there is a discounted rate available when you register for the cocktail reception and the spring forum together)**



## **Advocacy Report**

It has been a busy month with a number of bills the League has supported in the last session being heard in committees.

**Natural Resources:** Nancy Hedinger testified on a number of bills.

- S.1707 sets renewable energy goals for electricity sold in New Jersey. The 2052 goal is 80% from renewable sources.
- Again the League supported a bill (A.1492) requiring the State's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative which the Governor pulled New Jersey out of in 2011.
- The League has opposed the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) proposed rules revising three permitting programs dealing with flood hazard areas, stormwater management and coastal zone management. In the last session, the Legislature passed continuing resolutions stating these rules did not conform to legislative intent. The DEP had 30 days to respond and refused to change the rules. The legislature then had to pass a similar resolution to prevent the DEP from adopting the rules. ACR 160 was released from committee. SCR 66 was up in committee March 7. At that time the DEP agreed to make changes. We will have to wait until new rules are released to see if our concerns are addressed. The League sent a letter to the DEP again voicing our concerns with their proposals.

## **Women and Family Issues**

The League supported a pay equity bill S.992 and A.2750 which provides additional tools for those claiming wage discrimination. The bill passed both houses and now goes to the Governor. March 14, the last voting day before the budget break, we were part of a successful pay equity action day. A media event with diverse supporters speaking, walking the halls of the State House to build support and sitting in the gallery to observe the vote made for an exciting day. Watch for next steps

## **Government**

A bill (S1403) to establish online voter registration was released from the Senate Government Committee March 14. Our next steps will be to get the bill heard in the Assembly and then onto the floor of both houses. Mid May is probably the earliest committees will again meet as the Legislature enters "budget break."

**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@lwvnj.org](mailto:contact@lwvnj.org) or 609-394-3303.

**March 2016**

- 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
- **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

### **Learning the League: Advocacy and Lobbying**

As you probably know, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey has two arms. The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization and the League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund is a 501(c)(3), or public charity. 501(c)(3) organizations are subject to certain restrictions on lobbying activities. However, lobbying and general advocacy are separate activities, and 501(c)(3) organizations can participate in unlimited advocacy. The definition of lobbying is narrower than you may think!

#### **What lobbying is:**

There are two types of lobbying:

1. [“Direct lobbying”](#) is any attempt to influence legislation through communication with a member or employee of a legislative body, or with any other government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of legislation. “Direct lobbying” also includes communications by an organization to its members, encouraging those members to engage in direct lobbying.
2. [“Grassroots lobbying”](#) is any attempt to influence legislation through an attempt to affect the opinions of the general public. *Only when a 501(c)(3) organization tries to reach beyond its membership to get action from the general public is there grass-roots lobbying.*

For both direct and grassroots lobbying, the costs of researching and preparing materials, as well as the allocable portion of administrative, overhead, and other general expenses attributable to the activity count as part of the lobbying process.

#### **What lobbying is not:**

Several activities are expressly exempt from this definition of lobbying, including:

- Attempts to influence administrative agencies, such as the DEP or the Delaware Basin Commission;
- When members or volunteers communicate with a legislator or staff member, *with no expenditure of organization funds*;
- Certain technical assistance or advice to a governmental body or committee in response to an unsolicited, written request;

- So-called “self-defense activities”—i.e., communications concerning decisions that may affect an organization’s existence, powers, duties, 501(c)(3) status, or deductibility of contributions; and
- *Nonpartisan analysis, study, or research that may advocate a particular view*, provided that (a) presentation of the relevant facts is sufficient to enable readers to reach an independent conclusion, and (b) distribution of the results is not limited to or directed toward persons solely interested in one side of a particular issue.

Lobbying does not include any of the following advocacy activities:

- Conduct public education and training sessions about participation in the political process;
- Educate candidates on public issues;
- Prepare candidate questionnaires;
- Sponsor candidate debates;
- Conduct nonpartisan get-out-the-vote activities, voter registration, and education drives