



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

STATE BOARD REPORT

September 2016

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204 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
609-394-3303 * 800-792-VOTE * Fax: 609-599-3993
Email: contact@lwnj.org Web site: www.lwnj.org

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Dear Presidents and Members,

It's here! In less than two months, our nation will elect its 45th President and 115th Congress. We also will elect various county and local officials throughout the state. Leagues are busy inviting candidates to participate in Vote411, scheduling candidate forums and registration events, moderating candidates' forums, and registering voters. Inside this report you will find links to some helpful materials for this election season.

We hope you will take a break from your busy schedules to join us at Rider University in Lawrenceville on October 8th for the Fall Forum. This year, we will focus on voter registration modernization and how local Leagues can help us gain public and political support for these policies. Join us to explore how voting in New Jersey can be made easier and more cost effective and how Leagues can help make that happen in the coming year.

We hope you've left time in your fall/winter schedules for our study on Campus Sexual Assault. The study materials will be posted on the website this week and the questions should follow shortly. If we want to announce a position at Convention 2017, we will need your responses by late January. The study committee has put a lot of time and effort into preparing a thorough explanation of the issue. We need Leagues to participate in the consensus process in order to adopt a LWVNJ position. Please send us the date of your consensus meetings so members at large can consider participating with your League.

I will be scheduling a Presidents' and Leaders' call this month to discuss a new Board strategic planning initiative. The LWVNJ Board thus far has identified priorities, strategies and supporting activities for the organization. The next step in the process is to solicit your input. If you haven't already done so, please complete the Doodle Poll I sent out on Friday.

In League,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting Key Decisions

Meeting held: Saturday, September 10, 2016

League of Women Voters of New Jersey

A motion to forego a redistricting study recommended at LWVNJ Convention 2015, implicitly accepting the LWVUS position on redistricting adopted at LWVUS Convention 2016, was approved.

League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund

A motion to approve the Campus Sexual Assault Study and Consensus Questions, pending board recommended edits and clarification, was carried.

[Voter Registration in the 21st Century](#)

When: Saturday, October 8, 2016, 9 am – 1:30 pm

Where: Rider University, 2083 Lawrenceville Rd, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

Voter registration modernization has the ability to increase voter registration rates, improve accuracy in our voter rolls, and save money. Unfortunately, New Jersey still relies heavily on paper forms. Recently, Governor Christie once again vetoed legislation aimed to improve voter registration.

Join us Saturday, October 8, 9 am - 1:30 pm at Rider University to learn how **online voter registration and automatic voter registration** have been working in other states and the benefits of implementing them here.

The day will feature **two panel discussions of voting experts engaging in an in-depth exploration of voter registration modernization**. Staff from the Brennan Center for Justice will explain these technologies and New Jersey experts will talk about how these updates can improve voter outreach and engagement.

Speakers include:

- Staff from the Brennan Center for Justice, national experts on voter registration modernization
- Elizabeth Matto, Director, Youth Political Participation Program, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University
- Mary Ciccone, Managing Attorney, Disability Rights New Jersey
- Analilia Mejia, Executive Director, New Jersey Working Families

After lunch there will be a training session to help participants learn how to gain public and political support for these policies.

Registration is \$25 until September 28. A late fee applies after that date. Registration and coffee begin at 9 am and the program begins at 9:30. Lunch will be served.

We are not mailing out this information – please be sure your members receive this

Register by sending a check for \$25 to LWV NJ-EF, 204 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608 (memo fall forum) or [register online](#)

League considers operating only as 501 (c)(3)

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is currently a 501 (c) (4) nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Code's classification of organizations that qualify for federal income tax exemption, and the League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund is a 501 (c) (3), or public charity. Last year the state board established a Task Force to look at operating only as the 501 (c) (3), and leaving the 501 (c) (4) in existence but dormant. Three state Leagues have taken this step, Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin, and three more, Alaska, Arizona and Texas, are in the pipeline. All have concluded that they can continue their current levels of advocacy as 501 (c) (3) nonprofits. There were two well-attended information sessions on this at the LWVUS Convention last June.

A 501 (c) (3) organization can lobby as long as lobbying does not become a "significant" part of its work. The IRS only considers certain advocacy activities to be "lobbying", and has established a simple, straightforward expenditure test for this purpose. At the combined LWNJ and LWNJ-EF annual spending level, no more than 20% of our expenditures could be for lobbying. In our last fiscal year, less than 5% of the combined budget for LWNJ and LWNJ-EF was spent on lobbying. Even if a local League chose to lobby in the IRS sense, we would still be way below the 20% threshold. There are several ways that restructuring LWNJ would improve the bottom line:

- All contributions would be tax-deductible, not just contributions to EF, as at present.
- State membership dues for MALs would be tax-deductible.
- The accounting systems would be far simpler and easier to manage, saving staff and accountant time and costs.
- Audits and insurance would be simplified and far less costly.

No final decisions have been made and the Task Force is looking at the changes that would be required to bylaws, certificates of incorporation and the like. Stay tuned for further information, and a possible decision to be made at LWNJ's Convention.

- **New Materials Available:** LWVNJ now has postcards local Leagues can use at voter registration drives. When someone registers, have them fill out the back of the postcard, and mail it to them about a week before Election Day. We also have an updated Choosing a Candidate brochure available. Email jburns@lwnj.org for more info
- [**LWVUS Debate Watching Material**](#)
- [**Voter Registration Sample Social Media Content**](#)
- Casino Ballot Question Analysis:
http://lwnj.org/images/voting/2016/2016_BallotQ-Casinos.pdf
- Gas Tax Ballot Question Analysis:
http://lwnj.org/images/voting/2016/2016_BallotQ-TTF.pdf
- **Volunteers Needed:** Contact jburns@lwnj.org if interested. LWVNJ is looking for volunteers to
 - Answer the voter assistance hotline in our Trenton office (during business hours)
 - Join our redistricting team and work on redistricting reform
 - Join our Convention committee and help plan the 2017 LWVNJ Convention
 - Join our Special Events committee and help plan the 2017 Making Democracy Work Reception