

President

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Office hours are flexible.
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LWVB/N website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Your Voter is published
11 times a year. Send
copy by the second
Monday of the month to
Terri Parks at
lwvoter@verizon.net.

Membership Meeting

**Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom**

We'll make suggestions for the Legislative Priorities for the state League in the upcoming session of the state legislature. The state considers the input from each League and the issues that will come before the Assembly and State Senate in the 2023 legislative session when it sets the priorities that we all will address when we lobby our local assembly members and senators. Please review the attached LWNYS Summary on Positions. More information will be sent once you register for the meeting.

We will also discuss your suggestions for program events for 2023 for our League. What would you like to have us offer each month? Who would be engaging and meaningful presenters? What issues should we address?

And finally, we will address any other concerns you have for our League at this time.

We need your ideas!

Please register by email at lwvbn@lwvbn.org or by calling the League office: 716-986-4898. If you need to connect to the meeting by phone, please note that in your message.

League of Women Voters Mission

The League of Women Voters is a good government organization that encourages informed and active participation in the political process, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League never supports political parties or candidates.

President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you have weathered our unusual holiday season and look forward to a happy and healthy New Year!

We had a beautiful turnout for our holiday party on December 10. There were more than 40 people with a diversity of ages between 18 and 81+. By the hum in the room everyone had a lively time. Our guest speaker, Kelly Cultrara, a board member for Upward Design for Life, told us of the work they are doing helping people transition from shelters to a home. They provide the essentials and hope for a better future.

We will be having several membership events this spring. I hope you will join us; we need your input and enthusiasm to keep our League relevant. The membership meeting in January is via Zoom, and in March we are planning an in-person social event where you can bring interested friends to join us and learn about current League endeavors. See you there!

Lori Robinson

Healthcare Committee Report

Happy New Year! For 2023, the Healthcare Committee is planning to increase responsiveness to issues of concern to members. At our our last meeting in November 2022, committee members suggested that one area of concern is resources for caregiving and support for people with any sort of dementia. As a beginning to address this issue we are creating a list of resources to assist people and their caregivers. Highly recommended comes the Alzheimer's Association whose web site is www.alz.org. Anyone seeking help as a caregiver or a person living with Alzheimer's disease is encouraged to call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900. Care consultants with master's degrees are available at this number at no charge. There is also a wealth of useful information available via email on prevention, research, and care. Support groups for Alzheimer's are located in North Tonawanda and Kenmore, both meeting this month in person during the day. At the Alzheimer's Association office, 6400 Sheridan Drive, Amherst, both virtual and in-person support groups for wives, partners, daughters and men occur regularly in the afternoon and some evenings. The Elma and Lewiston groups also list monthly virtual caregiver group meetings. Some other support groups that specialize in Younger-Onset Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia, and Lewy Body Caregiver Support are described. Check out Western New York Alzheimer's Chapter for useful information at program.wny@alz.org or 716-626-0600.

Also recommended by Dr. Zorba Paster is the book "Surviving Alzheimer's...Practical Tips and Soul-Saving Wisdom for Caregivers" by Paula Spencer Scott. The advice in this book can apply to many different kinds of progressive dementias (although there are obviously some nuances specific to, say, Parkinson's dementia or dementia with Lewy bodies).

We welcome new committee members. Please contact us with your questions, resources, and suggestions at www.lwvbn.org. Do you know someone with dementia? Do you care for someone with dementia? Please share resources for other forms of dementia with us to help us prepare a resource list for members. Our monthly Zoom meeting day and time have changed to the fourth Tuesday of every month starting January 24, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. We would love to have you join us. Our committee focus will not be limited to this topic.

Alberta Roman, Chair, Healthcare Committee

West Valley Demonstration Project Draft SEIS Now Delayed to 2025

The LWV Buffalo Niagara filled its vacant seat on the West Valley Citizen Task Force in January 2019, anticipating that the Draft Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) would soon be released for public comment. I had already begun attending public meetings for more than a year on my own, but I was encouraged to seek a more formal voice and so became a representative from our League.

Our League has been involved at the nuclear site for more than 40 years, working in a coalition seeking adequate environmental protections during cleanup and decommissioning of the highly contaminated nuclear site 35 miles south of Buffalo. It would not be enough to turn the liquid waste in the tanks into solid form in preparation for shipping to a deep geological burial site in Nevada, or the equivalent, as required by Congress. The facilities and soil left behind would also need to be cleaned up.

The Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes ultimately needed to go to court to assure that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for decommissioning the site would be prepared. The court settlement in 1987 stipulated a process for public involvement in the preparation of an EIS. That EIS was released in 1996, without a recommendation for a cleanup process. Its stunning depiction of the geology of the site made it clear that a massive cleanup effort would be required. So naturally, they prepared new reports!

By 2002 celebration and publicity surrounded the completion of vitrification (turning into glass) of the liquid wastes. Most Western New Yorkers, if they have heard of the radioactive waste at West Valley, remember those celebrations and ask, “But that has already all been taken care of, right?” Not really. The solidified wastes are still there, encased in 278 stainless steel canisters inside 56 concrete casks visible from the road, for lack of a burial place out west, but they represented only a **part** of the waste.

When the so-called “Final EIS” was released in 2010, it was hardly “final.” While the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and the U.S. Department of Energy could agree on how to proceed with demolishing the aboveground facilities, the underground radioactive wastes were another matter. Some solid radioactive waste had been buried in unlined trenches and holes in the State and National Disposal Areas; other waste had leaked or spilled. Residue remained as a “bathtub ring” on the inside of a huge underground tank.

Further studies of geology and exhumation technology were needed before agreement might be reached on how much waste should be dug up and which wastes could be left in place. These studies and decisions would take 30 years, the officials said. The public, pressing for full cleanup, disagreed. While not conceding anything else, the agencies agreed to release a supplementary EIS in 10 years, in 2020, later revised to 2023.

The public was invited to participate in an exercise for “scoping” the DSEIS in 2018, and responded eagerly, submitting over 2,000 comments. The date for release of the DSEIS has continued to recede into the future. At the November 2022 Quarterly Public Meeting, the release date was deferred to 2025. Since the only reason given so far has been the difficulties in computer modeling, one can only suspect that the outcome of the models is not likely to be equally satisfying to the state and federal agencies, let alone the public.

Pat Townsend

League Meeting Schedule for 2023

There have been a number of changes to the meeting schedule that we published in the September Voter. Please note that the schedule below has the usual meeting days and times, but the dates may need to be changed on occasion. The Voter Calendar or notices to committee members is the best source of information for that month. The 2023 Schedule is printed on page 6.

Summary of Policy Positions

League of Women Voters of New York State 2022

UNDER LWVUS POSITIONS ON THE ELECTION PROCESS

- *Support* of comprehensive campaign finance reform, including public financing of campaigns.

LWVNY S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON ELECTION LAW

- *New Position-Support* extending the right to vote to all currently incarcerated individuals.
- *Support* the continuation of fusion voting in New York State.
- *Opposition* to term limits for members of the New York State Legislature.
- *Opposition* to term limits for New York State statewide elected officials.

UNDER LWVUS POSITIONS ON CITIZEN RIGHTS

- *Support* of citizen rights, including reproductive rights.
- *Support* of effective regulation of lobbying and ethics.

LWVNY S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON GOVERNMENT

- *Support* of standards to ensure equitable representation in the State Legislature and Congress.
- *Support* of improved measures to provide representation for legislative districts in case of a vacancy.
- *Support* of responsive and responsible legislative processes which increase the role of the individual member and the committee system.
- *Support* of procedural reforms in the constitutional convention process to promote openness and nonpartisanship.
- *Support* of the consolidation of government/shared services when it promotes effective and efficient operation of government.

NATURAL RESOURCES

UNDER LWVUS POSITIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

- *Support* for protection and management of New York's natural resources in the public interest, including energy conservation and energy options from renewable sources.
- *Support* for climate goals and policies ensuring a stable climate system for future generations.

LWVNY S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCES

- *Support* for measures to achieve watershed protection including limiting pesticide use and applying Best Management Practices.
- *Support* for a state-established, intergovernmental system for land resource management.
- *Support* for a proactive role for New York State in regional land use planning, containing urban sprawl and protecting sensitive areas.
- *Support* of reconditioning of the New York State Erie/Barge Canal System and its development for recreational uses.
- *Support* for preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem.

SOCIAL POLICY

UNDER LWVUS POSITIONS ON SOCIAL POLICY

- *Support* for equality of opportunity, meeting basic human needs, childcare, energy-efficient and environmentally sound public transit, gun control and high-speed, affordable internet access.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

- *Support* for equity in employment laws and practices and equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON EQUALITY FOR ALL

- *Support* of measures that hold marriage to be an economic partnership with a presumption of equality between the spouses.
- *Opposition* to measures that contain a presumption of joint custody of the children.
- *Support* of measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

- *Support* measures to meet the needs for affordable and accessible housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities.
- *Support* of a livable wage for all localities in New York State.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON STATE FINANCES

- *Support* reforms for greater equity in education financing (K-12) for both pupils and taxpayers.
- *Support* for raising funds to provide New York's children with a sound basic education through increases in the New York State personal income tax, implemented in a progressive fashion.
- *Support* for the replacement of the existing local residential property tax relief programs in which relief goes to all with programs based on need, with annual cost of living adjustment.
- *Oppose* in principle the use of public funds to support non-public schools (K-12).
- *Support* the funding of public higher education and the existing formula for financing the community system, 1/3 tuition, 1/3 state aid, and 1/3 county support.
- *Support* a uniform equitable assessment and property tax system.
- *Support* of measures to provide for openness and accountability in the operation of the New York State public authority system.
- *Support* of a timely and responsive state budget.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON HEALTH CARE

- *Support* equitable access to quality care, public health investments, health and safety standards that protect patients and providers, cost-effective payment and delivery alternatives, and regular public evaluation.
- *Support* of measures that enable individuals to assume responsibility for their own health and to participate in decisions, including extraordinary life-extending procedures.
- *Support* for the option of medical aid in dying for the terminally ill.
- *Support* single-payer public financing as a viable and desirable approach to implementing equitable access, affordability, and financial feasibility.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON JUDICIAL ISSUES

- *Support* of a unified state court system with improved provisions for judicial selection.

LWVNY'S SPECIFIC POSITIONS ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- *Support* of a criminal justice system that is just, effective, efficient and transparent.
- *Support* of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels to prevent racial and economic profiling.
- *Support* of alternatives to incarceration.
- *Support* of measures to improve pretrial procedures in the criminal courts.
- *Support* of measures to promote a fair and efficient jury system.
- *Support* the rights of indigent defendants to representation at public expense.
- *Support* of legislation and changes in public policy to stop human forced labor and sex trafficking.



1272 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January 2023

Tuesday, January 3, 4:00 p.m.
Program/Issues/Events Committee
 via Zoom

Monday, January 9, 4:00 p.m.
Board of Directors
 via Zoom

Wednesday, January 11, 2:00 p.m.
Local Government
 via Zoom

Thursday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.
Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Committee
 via Zoom

Monday, January 16, 4:30 p.m.
Education Committee
 via Zoom

Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 p.m.
Membership Meeting
 via Zoom

Tuesday, January 24, 7:00 p.m.
Healthcare Committee
 via Zoo

	Meeting Day	Time	General Exceptions
Program/Issues/Events Committee	1st Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	
Great Decisions	1st Thursday	10:00 a.m.	No mtg. in Dec., Jan., Feb.
Board of Directors	2nd Monday	4:00 p.m.	No mtg. in Dec. or June
Local Government Committee	2nd Wednesday	2:00 p.m.	
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Comm.	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m.	
Education Committee	4th Tuesday	4:30 p.m.	
Healthcare Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	
Waterfront Committee	TBA		