



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF EAST NASSAU

Voter

*At local, state and national levels
the League works to influence public policy
through education and advocacy.*

January, 2011

Save the Dates

Wednesday, January 19 – 12:00 N
LWVEN Holiday Luncheon
See right column.

LWVEN 2011 Board Meetings:

Location: Levittown Library
January 5 – Room 1 – 2:00 PM
February 2 – Room A – 1:30 PM
March 2 – Room A – 1:30 PM
April 6 – Room 1 – 7:30 PM
May 4 – Room 1 – 7:30 PM
June 2 – Room 1 – 7:30 PM

All members are welcome to attend Board Meetings.

LWVNC Board Meetings:

Location: Hempstead Library
January 4 – 6:45 PM
January 25 – 6:45 PM

Wednesday, March 16 – 7:30 PM

LWVEN General Meeting

Speaker: Dr. Michael Hadjiargyrou
Topic: Human Genetic Engineering
Levittown Library, Rooms A & B

Wednesday, May 11 – 11:30 AM

LWVNC will be honored at a luncheon of the National Council of Jewish Women for its advocacy work. See p.8 & next VOTER for further information.

Please note: LWVNC and Hofstra University are planning a forum on Redistricting to be held either at the end of February or in March. Stay tuned for further information!

Don't Forget!!

LWVEN HOLIDAY LUNCHEON



Wednesday, January 19th 2011, 12:00 Noon

Per Un'Angelo Restaurant

3275 Byron St., Wantagh, 516-783-6484

Cost: \$26.00/person

Please send checks by Jan. 11th.

Directions: Wantagh Parkway South to exit 6 East. Go to second (2nd) traffic light. Turn right on Atlantic Boulevard. Go to end and make a right turn on Byron—Parking on left.

Please reserve _____ places for LWVEN's 2011 Holiday Luncheon on January 19, at 12N.
Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____



Please clip and mail, with your check payable to the League of Women Voters of East Nassau, to: LWVEN, c/o Barbara Josepher, 339 Cold Spring Rd., Syosset NY 11791

LWVNYS Lobby Corps

The League of Women Voters of NYS is developing a Lobby Corps, similar to that of the LWVUS. The purpose is to train a group of volunteers who will then communicate the League's positions on proposed legislation in person directly to the members of the state Senate and Assembly. The volunteer lobbyists will receive background information, talking points and individual assignments of legislators. Come make a difference – and try something new in the League! Contact the state office if you are interested: 518-465-4162.

League of Women Voters® of East Nassau

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Lesley Pollak, Advertising

County Legislature Meeting Schedule

Monday, Jan. 24 10:00 AM

The Nassau County Legislature meets in the Legislative Chamber, 1st floor, 1550 Franklin Ave, Mineola, 571-4252. An admittance pass must be obtained. Call for scheduled committee meeting dates and times.

Town of Hempstead Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, Jan. 11 7:00 PM
Tuesday, Feb. 8 7:00 PM
Tuesday, Feb. 22 10:30 AM

The Hempstead Town Board meets at Town Hall, in the Nathan H. Bennett Pavilion, 489-5000.

Town of Oyster Bay Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, Jan. 4 10:00 AM
Tuesday, Jan 18 10:00 AM
Tuesday, Feb. 1 10:00 AM
Tuesday, Feb. 15 10:00 AM

The Oyster Bay Town Board meets at 54 Audrey Ave., Oyster Bay, 624-6390.

**Call before
attending.
Schedules
are subject
to change.**



LWVEN Board of Directors – 2010-2011

OFFICERS

President/Affordable Housing:	Barbara Epstein	221-1948
Vice Presidents:		
Judicial Liaison/ Environment:	Lorraine Newman	735-4876
Voter Service/HAVA:	Norma Schaeffer	489-3133
Bulletin Circulation/ Special Events:	Mary Price	731-0812
Secretary/ Health Care/ Natural Resources	Anne Ostling	681-8996
Treasurer:	Barbara Josepher	921-8749

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Public Relations:	Bobby Stim	731-1067
Voter Service:	Claire Gavrin	781-7274
Programs:	Janet Spar	735-8673
Social Policy:	Sandra Mintz	868-5578
Special Districts/ Students Inside Albany:	Lillian Broad	781-8685
Member- at-Large	Shirley Bard	781-9570
Off Board		
Students Inside Albany:	Judy Schecter	221-5448

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Keeping Connected

LWVUS & LWVUS Education Fund

1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036-4508
202-429-1965, www.lwv.org, lwv@lwv.org

LWVNYS & LWVNYS Education Foundation

62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
518-465-4162, www.lwvny.org, lwvny@lwvny.org, www.lwvny-bulletins.org

LWV of Nassau County:

Post Office Box 539, Point Lookout, NY 11569, 516-431-1628
www.lwvofnassaucounty.org, vote@lwvofnassaucounty.org



Barbara's Corner

I was very pleased to learn that the Town of Hempstead is now going to have a prescription drug disposal program (dates and locations will be printed in our bulletin). They will also include the shredding of documents. Now, all three towns have drug disposal programs. Don't forget to let your local officials know that you want them to continue these programs. They are good for us and for the environment.

Beginning in 2011 we will be lobbying our congressional representatives as well as our state legislators. If you are interested in visiting either and lobbying for league positions, please contact Polly Nager (for the congressional visits): 796-6211, and/or Norma Schaeffer (for visits to our state legislators): 489-3133.

The LWVUS voted at the last national convention to undertake a study of "*Privatization: the Policy Agenda to Transfer Government Functions, Services and Assets to the Private Sector*". The study will focus on the impact of privatizing government services on local communities. If you are interested in being on the study committee for our local league, please let me know via email byeppie@aol.com or by phone 221-1948.

My very best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year for one and all.

**Next pharmaceutical disposal and shredding date in our area:
Sunday, March 13, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM - Town Parking Field L2, Division Ave., Levittown (behind Tri-County Flea Market).**

Reform At Last

The League of Women Voters of New York State congratulates the state legislature on the passage in special session of the Quadrennial Commission for Judicial Compensation to determine fair and equitable compensation for our judges and justices. The League is proud of its five-year role in pressing for passage of legislation that provides a fair and objective process to determine the compensation of our judiciary.

New York judges and justices have not received pay increases for more than eleven years. This Commission will take the politics out of the process of determining judicial compensation and will preserve the independence of the judiciary by breaking the link to legislative pay raises.

The League of Women Voters of NYS applauds Governor Paterson for including the reform measure on the extraordinary session agenda and thanks Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader John Sampson for their action. Finally the League thanks Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman for his tireless work to achieve this ground breaking reform depoliticizing the process by which judges are compensated. (LWVNYS)

Men in authority will always think that criticism of their policies is dangerous. They will always equate their policies with patriotism, and find criticism subversive.
~Henry Steele

Go Greener, Save Money

In the Bathroom:

If you don't have a low-flow toilet, put a plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet tank to reduce the amount of water used per flush.

Put a bucket in the shower while you're waiting for the water to warm up, and use the water you catch for watering plants or cleaning.

To check for a toilet leak, put dye or food coloring into the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there's a leak that should be repaired.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.

Turn off the water while shaving, and instead fill the bottom of the sink with a few inches of water to rinse your razor.

Install a low-flow shower head. It may cost you some money up front, but your water conservation efforts will save you money down the road.

Spend less time in the shower. If you lose track of time in the shower, bring a radio into the bathroom and time yourself by how many songs play while you're in there. Try to get your shower time down to one song (or less).

If you take a bath, keep the water level low.

Fix those leaky faucets. You may think that a constant drip is just annoying, but it's also a huge waste of water (you can lose about 20 gallons of water per day from a single drippy faucet!).

Continued on page 7



Only 16% Of Long Islanders Say Preschoolers Are Highest Funding Priority

Social skills are more important than ABC's and 123's, says EYI poll results

“Most Long Islanders view spending for preschool age children as a low priority when compared to school-age children, according to a survey commissioned by The Early Years Institute from the Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research. In a poll of 807 Nassau and Suffolk county residents representing a cross-section of the Island’s population, just 16 percent believed young children – ages 0 – 5 -- should have the highest priority for spending aimed at success in school and in life. Meanwhile, 63 percent of those surveyed believe that social skills are more important than knowing numbers and letters before kindergarten. Only 19 percent said that 123’s and ABC’s were most important for young children.

Although there was little support for significant spending on young children, fully 91 percent of those surveyed believe that outside play “helps children to learn either some or great deal,” and a greater number of Long Islanders thought it was bad (49 percent) than good (28 percent) for children to spend increased time using computers and other electronic devices.

“These results underline the focus of The Early Years Institute’s conference, ‘We Interrupt this Program: Learning and Play in the Age of Hyper-Media,’” noted Dana E. Friedman, Ed.D., president of EYI, a not-for profit organization that educates parents, professionals and the public about the importance of the early years. “We know that media is a big part of our lives and we can’t make it go away, but we also know that reduced exposure to screen time is the key to more free time and outdoor play.” Friedman also expressed concern over the lack of support for more pre-school funding. “Despite 30 years of education reform in this country, we still don’t understand that children are born learning and education starts before Kindergarten.” she said. “If 95 percent of brain development happens in the first five years of childhood, shouldn’t we be putting more resources into supports for parents and early childhood programs?”

The Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research conducted the survey by telephone between October 1st and November 6th, 2010 on behalf of EYI. The Early Years Institute, based in Plainview, N.Y., was formed in 2008 to increase investments in young children in order to improve early learning opportunities and school readiness.”

(source: Early Learning Institute)



Win for the League and the Voter Registration Process

(From blog of Elisabeth MacNamara, President, LWVUS - Nov 17 2010)

In the run-up to the election, many may have missed a critically important court decision on voter registration... A three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *Gonzalez v. Arizona* that the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) blocks the state of Arizona from implementing a proof-of-citizenship requirement for voter registration.

This is important for two reasons: First, it blocks the discriminatory requirements set by Arizona. (Many Americans don’t have the necessary documents to prove citizenship, and the mail-in registration process doesn’t really work very well with such requirements.) Second, it clarifies that the federal NVRA sets the terms for voter registration applications – the states can’t add more requirements.

This was a huge win for the League of Women Voters. Not only had the LWV of Arizona and the LWVUS pursued this case for several years (this was the second time it went to the Ninth Circuit), but the appeals panel agreed with the points we raised in our amicus brief. As the major proponent for the NVRA when it passed Congress, and as an organization that registers thousands of voters every year, we had a special interest in the case. Many of our sister organizations also worked on *Gonzalez*, arguing that the Arizona requirements violated the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Protection Clause, and the constitutional bar on poll taxes, in addition to the NVRA.

We expect the state of Arizona to ask the entire Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to rehear the case en banc, and it likely will make its way eventually to the Supreme Court. We are hopeful that the fact that former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor (who is from Arizona) was in the majority on the three-judge panel (she sat “by designation” as retired judges sometimes do) will help protect the decision. The dissenting judge raised technical legal issues largely unrelated to the NVRA and, at least from our perspective, didn’t understand the basics of the NVRA. (In fact, the Senate at first passed an amendment to the NVRA to allow states to require proof-of-citizenship — but the amendment was explicitly rejected later in the legislative process. And the Election Assistance Commission...also rejected such requirements.)

At least for now, the voter registration process is safe from attempts to add discriminatory new requirements. But, as always, we will need to remain vigilant at every level of government and every level of League.

We Have Paper Ballots, Now What?



2010 Election Survey:

Machines Perform But Privacy Suffers

In New York's first test case on using our new paper ballots, Nassau County's 7th Senate District race, the state courts "have essentially ruled that even if New York's audit laws require further manual counting of paper ballots, accepting machine results and declaring a winner outweigh the public's right to know who really won the election.

The dispute demonstrates the typical dynamic in close political contests. Regardless of party affiliation, the candidate in the lead wants to stop further ballot counting, the candidate behind wants to continue, and the courts almost always get involved..."

"New York State now has one of the necessary conditions for verifiable election outcomes - paper ballots. Political parties will contest outcomes in court (nowadays that's just the way we do elections in the United States). So New York's judiciary needs to embrace the value of counting the paper, and state law needs to be changed to clarify when the paper should be counted.

The law should stipulate when recounts are mandated to make them less subject to judicial fiat when races are close. Three changes would get us a lot closer to this standard:

Adopt statistical auditing methods that require checking more machines than current law when vote margins are close.

State law currently requires that both election commissioners agree to escalate an audit. But this will never happen, because one commissioner is appointed by Democrats and the other by Republicans, and these appointees are expected to represent their party's position in election disputes - particularly in important races. New York law must change to allow either commissioner to escalate the audit.

Adopt new standards that require hand counts of all votes in elections where the difference between candidate vote totals is 1/2 percent or less.

With changes like this, we'll be a lot closer to realizing the full potential of our paper ballots than we are today. The new legislative session starts in January; there's a lot of work to be done."

Editor's note: This I part of an opinion piece that was on the blog of Bo Lipari (founder of New Yorkers for Verified Voting (NYVV), and then in Newsday. It is here to elicit your comments, that we then will share with the LWNYS board. Send your comments to paulablum@hotmail.com.

Go Greener, Save Money, continued from page 3:

When you wash your hands, turn on the water briefly to wet them, turn it off while you lather up, then on again to rinse. You'll save water and soap this way.

If you're in the market for a toilet, buy a low-flow model; they use as little as half as much water as normal toilets. Also, look into the water-saving dual flush toilets currently used around the world.

Don't flush things down the toilet to dispose of them. Throw away tissues and other bathroom waste in the garbage can, which doesn't require gallons of water.

The League of Women Voters of New York State released the results of an online survey of voters' experiences using the new paper ballot optical scanning system that was implemented statewide for the 2010 election cycle.

The online survey of 1,072 respondents, from 47 counties including all 5 counties of NYC, showed that the voting machines indeed did perform well; however, the respondents did make note of several inadequacies that the League feels must be addressed to ensure that voters are guaranteed a secure and private franchise. The League's recommendations for immediate action are listed below:

* **Increased Voter Education on the Voting Process.**

The State Board of Elections must provide standard template materials which county boards of elections can tailor for their specific needs. Remaining HAVA funds should be used for this purpose.

* **Increased Training for All Elections Personnel.**

The survey showed an immediate need for better trained election personnel. Legislation has passed permitting split shifts for election inspectors and recruitment of younger poll workers. These new laws need to be implemented.

* **Revision of the Paper Ballot for Maximum Usability by Voters.**

There is an immediate need for improving the design of the ballot. Legislation to address the full-face ballot should be a legislative priority and should be introduced early in the 2011 Legislative Session.

* **Privacy Issues.** Over 20 percent said they did not have sufficient privacy in marking the ballot, scanning the ballot, or were not given a privacy sleeve or instructed how to use it. Poll workers need to be trained that any viewing of the markings on a completed ballot is a violation of the voter's privacy.

As noted by League Elections Specialist, Aimee Allaud, "Improving ballot design, providing better trained poll workers and ensuring privacy in voting are fundamental to our voter electoral system. We must take immediate steps to resolve these problems." "The League's Voter Survey shows that we need to do much, much more if we're to take full advantage of the State's new voting systems. In particular, the design of New York's ballot must be completely overhauled in order to be fully usable by voters." said Bo Lipari, the League's Technology Director.

The full report is available on the LWNYS website: www.lwny.org.



Health Reform Will Survive Its Legal Fight

By Eric H. Holder Jr. and Kathleen Sebelius



“... [T]he recent lawsuits challenging the Affordable Care Act [are very] troubling. Roughly 20 cases question the new law's individual responsibility provision, which says that Americans who can afford to must maintain basic health coverage. Federal courts in Michigan and Virginia have upheld the law as constitutional, but ... a federal court in Virginia reached the opposite result. These and other cases will continue through our courts as opponents try to block the law. But these attacks are wrong on the law, and if allowed to succeed, they would have devastating consequences for everyone with health insurance.

The majority of Americans who have health insurance pay a higher price because of our broken system. Every insured family pays an average of \$1,000 more a year in premiums to cover the care of those who have no insurance. Everyone wants health care to be affordable and available when they need it. But we have to stop imposing extra costs on people who carry insurance, and that means everyone who can afford coverage needs to carry minimum health coverage...

If we want to prevent insurers from denying coverage to people with preexisting conditions, it's essential that everyone have coverage. Imagine what would happen if everyone waited to buy car insurance until after they got in an accident. Premiums would skyrocket, coverage would be unaffordable, and responsible drivers would be priced out of the market. The same is true for health insurance. Without an individual responsibility provision, controlling costs and ending discrimination against people with preexisting conditions doesn't work.

The legal arguments made against the law gloss over this problem even as opponents have sought to invent new constitutional theories and dig up old ones that were rejected 80 years ago. Opponents claim the individual responsibility provision is unlawful because it "regulates inactivity." But none of us is a bystander when it comes to health care. All of us need health care eventually. Do we pay in advance, by getting insurance, or do we try to pay later, when we need medical care?

The individual responsibility provision says that as participants in the health-care market, Americans should pay for insurance if they can afford it. That's important because when people who don't have insurance show up at emergency rooms, we don't deny them care. The costs of this uncompensated care - \$43 billion in 2008 - are then passed on to doctors, hospitals, small businesses and Americans who have health insurance.

As two federal courts have already held, this unfair cost-shifting harms the marketplace. For decades, Supreme Court decisions have made clear that the Constitution allows Congress to adopt rules to deal with such harmful economic effects, which is what the law does - it regulates how we pay for health care by ensuring that those who have insurance don't continue to pay for those who don't. Because of the long-held legal precedent of upholding such provisions, even President Ronald Reagan's solicitor general, Charles Freid, called legal objections to the law "far-fetched."

As these lawsuits continue, Americans should be clear about what the opponents of reform are asking the courts to do. Striking down the individual responsibility provision means slamming the door on millions of Americans ... who've been locked out of our health insurance markets, and shifting more costs onto families who've acted responsibly. It's not surprising that opponents, having lost in Congress, have taken to the courts. We saw similar challenges to laws that created Social Security and established new civil rights protections. Those challenges ultimately failed, and so will this one.

Rather than fighting to undo the progress we've made, and returning to the days when one out of seven Americans was denied insurance due to their medical histories, supporters of repeal should work with us to implement this law effectively. The initial decisions about the Affordable Care Act will be reviewed on appeal. We are confident that the law will ultimately be upheld."

(Eric H. Holder Jr. is US attorney general, Kathleen Sebelius is secretary of health and human services)

County Corner

* LWV of Nassau County and Hofstra University will co-sponsor a forum on Redistricting either at the end of February or in March. More information will be available in the next VOTER.

* LWVNC is **being honored** by the National Council of Jewish Women for our advocacy work. The award will be presented at a luncheon on **Wednesday, May 11, 2011**, at 11:30 AM, at Temple Avodah in Oceanside.

The theme of the luncheon, is **Women + Advocacy = Power**. In recognition of LWVNC's advocacy within our community, there will also be the presentation of a monetary award to be used towards the county League's **2011 Voters Guide**. Another honoree at this event is Judy Jacobs, NC Legislator and long-time member of our League. Save the date for this event. There will be further information in a subsequent VOTER.