



Newsletter February 2022

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The Prez says ...



by Dare Thompson

If you watch local news in your house - or read a good local newspaper - you probably know that the State Legislature is back at work in Albany. The half-year session always starts with a focus on the budget, which is supposed to be voted on by

April 1. Until then it's hard to get a legislator's attention with any issue that's not budget-related, but it doesn't mean we aren't trying now and preparing for the action to come. And we have many opportunities for you to participate in this and other advocacy.

To inform us, and engage us in its work, the state League presented a “Hot Topics” Zoom meeting outlining all the state-level issues LWV staff and volunteers are working on. (Go to <https://youtu.be/-hPV2R7KhHo> if you are interested in seeing the recording of this meeting.) The issues and the people presenting them were so inspiring it made you want to hop on over to Albany and buttonhole a legislator!

We will talk about these “Hot Topics” at a meeting on Tuesday, January 31, at 7 PM on Zoom - because the League has asked us to send the top three issues we want them to focus on.

Advance alert: we will also be able to participate even more directly in the advocacy by meeting, at a time convenient to us, with our local state Assembly and Senate members, in their local offices. PLEASE contact me at darethompson@gmail.com if you'd like to participate in any of these visits. You can simply accompany more seasoned members if this is new to you, so don't be shy. We always leave these meetings with new insights into how government works and you will be having a real impact on those who represent you.

Also, don't forget that on-going opportunities abound to be a good advocate in local government. Example: We need members sitting in on all three county legislatures. We increase our power enormously if we are seen watching them! We add to that power by sharing what we see with one another and posting reports. Google your county's legislature, look at their calendar, and

attend any meeting that interests you. Their monthly full-body meetings are a good place to get a feel for the issues and “the players,” but you’ll find that committee meetings are often livelier.

In Ulster, we hope you’ll consider watching the Ulster County Charter Revision Commission in action. Go to <https://ulstercountyny.gov/charter-revision-commission> for details about meeting times and more. These full-document revisions happen only every ten years and League member, Tom Kadgen, is a member of the Commission. The League is proud to have been critically important in establishing the charter several years ago and we keep a watchful eye on any adjustments made.

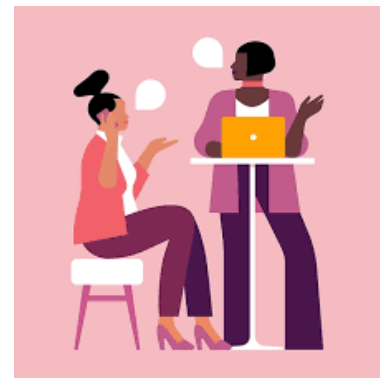
We will talk about these “Hot Topics” at a meeting on Tuesday, January 31, at 7 PM on [Zoom](#) - because the League has asked us to send the top three issues we want them to focus on. And if you want to participate in the possible addition of a hot topic in the future, come to our February 7th concurrence meeting on Ranked Choice Voting referred to elsewhere in this newsletter. Voters are getting increasingly interested in this way of electing their representatives and we need to be fully informed.

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Action Items

**Get the most out of a Membership and
Be Involved with Your Local League!**

This section offers reports from ongoing groups and a Calendar to keep us connected:



MEETING DATES & ZOOM LINKS-

January- February

* All members and interested non-members are welcome at all League meetings unless otherwise indicated.

January 31st

7 PM

Hot Topics at State Level

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87316372054?
pwd=Znc0cVJ6TXR3a0xLekpRSFNsMVdHdz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87316372054?pwd=Znc0cVJ6TXR3a0xLekpRSFNsMVdHdz09)

February 7th

12:30 AM

LWV Mid-Hudson Membership Committee Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86309152442?
pwd=eGlxQU1WRG53NE9SWUNZS1I1eWExZz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86309152442?pwd=eGlxQU1WRG53NE9SWUNZS1I1eWExZz09)

February 7th

7PM- 8:30 PM

Ranked Choice Voting Concurrence

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?
pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCODFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCODFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09)

February 13th

1:45 PM

LWVMHR Book Club

Enzo's Restaurant

Kingston

February 16th

7 PM

LWVMHR

Board Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82555616265?>

[pwd=M0w4bFJCL0U1cTY4Q3l6RUtlY1F1dz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82555616265?pwd=M0w4bFJCL0U1cTY4Q3l6RUtlY1F1dz09)

February 17th

Noon

League Southern Tier Meetup

[Silk Factory](#), Newburgh

Hot Topic Zoom!

Tuesday, January 31st, 7 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87316372054?>

[pwd=Znc0cVJ6TXR3a0xLekpRSFNsMVdHdz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87316372054?pwd=Znc0cVJ6TXR3a0xLekpRSFNsMVdHdz09)



Learn about STATE ISSUES we are working on.

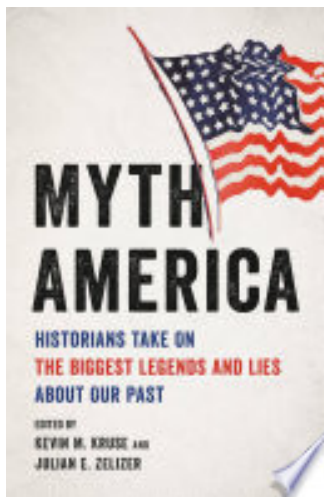
JOIN US to choose the TOP THREE issues we care most about at the State level.

All members are encouraged to consider getting involved in any of the following "hot topics" many of which have been hot with the League for decades:

NY Equal Rights Amendment
Medical Aid in Dying
Election Laws
**The Environment (including energy
and agricultural issues)**
Court Simplification
Education Finance
Campaign Finance
Criminal Justice
Rural Issues
Health Care

At this Zoom meeting we will give brief summaries of the work being considered concerning each issue before picking our top three. If you can't attend, you can also email me at darethompson@gmail.com with your thoughts.

Check out this excellent video from the State "Hot Topic Meeting" . Good stuff happening in the League of Women Voters!
<https://youtu.be/-hPV2R7KhHo>



LWVMHR Book Club Meeting

by Daisy Tyler

All regular attendees of our discussion group were present on January 9th at Enzo's Restaurant in Kingston. We had a lively discussion over the novel "Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker" by the popular author, Jennifer Chiaverini. It's the story of Elizabeth Keckley, a free slave, and her friendship with Mrs. Lincoln. All the action takes place at the White House, during the period of the Civil War

and the Lincoln Administration. Through Mrs. Lincoln's dressmaker, Elizabeth, one can learn of the difficult decisions that were involved during that terrible war. The author brings alive those historical characters that we, perhaps, know only by their last name.

We definitely recommend this novel for your reading list!

The next Book Club will be on Monday, February 13th, 1:45PM at [Enzo's in Kingston](#).

The book to read is: "Myth America. Historians Take On The Biggest Legends And Lies About Our Past" by Kevin M. Kruse and Julian E. Zelizer

“ To be sure, there have been lies in our public discourse, but in the last few years the flood gates have opened wide, and the line between fact and fiction has become increasingly blurred if not completely erased. Unlike past eras which myths and misunderstandings have clouded our national debate, the current crisis stands apart both for the degree of misinformation and the the deliberateness with which it has spread.” (Kruse & Zelizer, Authors)

This book is a collection of twenty essays about the lies and legends that have surfaced in our current political reality. You might recognize some of them - others will surprise you.

We invite members to come and analyze these twenty readings and give us your opinions. Some critics aren't sure of the validity of the authors' historical analysis. Come and see what you think.

As always, we encourage members to borrow the book from the library or purchase from local booksellers.



**Mid Hudson Ranked
Choice Voting (RCV)
Concurrence**

on Tuesday, February 7,

7:00- 8:30 PM

After the Mid Hudson League Ranked Choice Voting Committee reviewed the pros and cons of rank choice voting as well as the efforts of sister leagues in New York City, Syracuse, and Long Island, it decided to move with a concurrence session. The concurrence would be with the original New York City Statement (below). If you are interested in Ranked Choice Voting, regardless of your level of familiarity, please consider attending the Zoom meeting.

Here is the Zoom link for the RCV concurrence meeting on Tuesday, Feb 7, 7- 8:30 pm:

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?
pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCOZFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89792732490?pwd=WmxvNnpSUDVCOZFIZFI2K0VKMHI5Zz09)

What is concurrence?

Concurrence is the process through which Leagues can adopt a new position without doing their own study because another (trusted) League has done that study.

If a League adopts a position, it means it supports that position. In this case NYC has studied the issue of Ranked Choice Voting and we could ask LWV MHV members to adopt the NYC position.

If the consensus of the LWV MHV members is to concur, our League will be adopting the NYC position
LWV of the City of New York Position on Ranked Choice Voting position:

"We support ranked-choice voting (sometimes called "instant runoff voting") in all local elections, including primaries, specials, and general elections.

Voters should have the option to rank at least three and at most six candidates for a given office.

The counting should cease to reallocate votes once a candidate receives over 50% of the current round's vote.

RCV/IRV should happen instead of any head-to-head runoffs that might otherwise have occurred.

Adequate funding should be provided for training, equipment, staff, and voter education."

Please address any questions to Gerda Maissel at grdmaissel@gmail.com or Dave Heller at mrplutocrat@aol.com

Assisting Bard College on its MLK Day of Engagement

by Kathy OConnor

On Monday, January 16th, four of our League members engaged with Bard first-year students via Zoom, on the subject of Civic Engagement and Voter Advocacy. Participating in this discussion were our President Dare Thompson, our Vice President Jennifer Clark, along with League members Rebecca Edwards and Kathy OConnor. We were joined with approximately 90 Bard students



with backgrounds from all over the country, as well as a number of students who came from countries around the globe.

Our President Dare Thompson moderated the meeting, welcomed the students, and explained the role of our local League of Women voters with regard to advocacy. Rebecca Edwards, former City of Poughkeepsie Council member, spoke of her experience in the local political arena, and how important it was for her to hear from any of her constituents as to what mattered for them.

Jennifer Clark, League Vice President, gave a brief explanation of the varying roles of local officials. And Kathy O'Connor brought up a couple of issues for which we might consider advocating for in the Hudson Valley.

We emphasized how important it was for each student to ensure that they were registered to vote, either in the Hudson Valley or from whence they came. We encouraged voting locally because of its simplicity, but did not discourage voting by absentee ballot if there were issues at their homes that they wanted to weigh in on.

It was a pleasure to participate in this MLK day of engagement activity, and we appreciate Bard College reaching out to us.



LWVNYS/ Mid-Hudson ERA Advocacy Taskforce News

LWV Mid-Hudson Members Louise Reavis & Cindy Lanzetta attended the first State ERA

Taskforce Meeting. Based on the information learned, our

League joined many other local Leagues in a letter of support to the Legislature in favor of the New York State Equal Rights Amendment. Thanks to the hard work of various groups and many individuals, the Legislature voted, a second time, to amend the State Constitution to prohibit discrimination by the government based on a person's ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex — including their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes. The next step will be to educate the public on the proposed amendment and encourage them to vote for it in the 2024 election. There is bound to be controversy, so we will be offering more information on how our local League can help. Stay tuned!

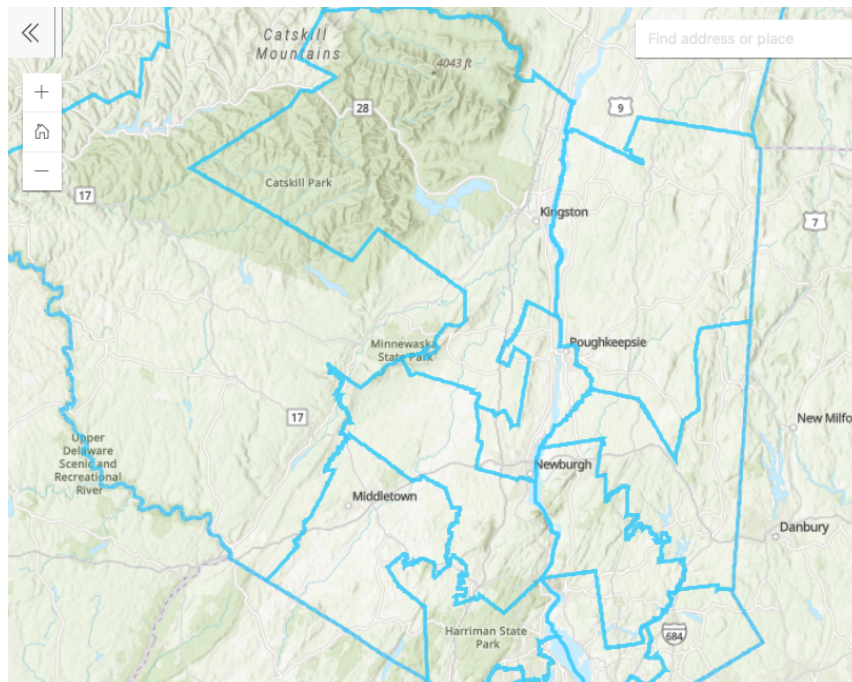
NYS Assembly Districts Will Change

While new Congressional Districts and State Senate Districts were effected before our November general election, time constraints prohibited the process being concluded for the State Assembly Districts. A new map has now been created for all our NYS Assembly Districts, and the New York Independent Redistricting Commission (NYIRC.GOV) is now taking comments from the public regarding their thoughts on how their districts have been amended.

You can view the proposed change to your Assembly District on the Redistricting Commission's website (NYIRC.GOV). In order to make your voice heard regarding the proposed change to your Assembly District, you need to create an account on the Redistricting Commission's website, and either submit a comment for the record, or testify at one of their upcoming public

hearings. **The hearing that is set for the Mid-Hudson Valley Region occurs at 4 p.m. Monday January 30th. You need to register by the 28th in order to testify. You can attend these public hearings in person or by Zoom.**

Pay attention to the proposed changes in your area. All of our districts in the Mid-Hudson Valley have been radically affected. When a new Assembly map is finally approved, sometime after the close of the public hearings in March, that map will be in force for the 2024 elections until after the next census in 2030.



LWV Healthcare Reform

Everyone requires access to healthcare at some point. We all need good health and well being. There are a number of organized LWV members working hard toward national healthcare reforms. With communications, information, and the League's credibility, they've been making inroads toward making it possible for all US citizens to have an affordable, efficient and effective

healthcare system. The group's recent monthly newsletter pointed out that the Koch Brothers think tank, Mercatus Center, commissioned a study to refute the validity of Medicare for All and instead, the study found that trillions of dollars could be saved by instituting that system. It's a well-established fact that regular care leads to better outcomes and improved well-being. LWVNY's new Healthcare Positions, as well as the LWVNY Rural Caucus' work (with an initial focus of healthcare), were both highlighted as positive developments for 2021.

To learn more or to get involved, go to [LWV Healthcare Reform Toolkit](#). If interested, there is a link to receive the monthly newsletter.

Cindy Bell

Regional Meetup Groups

A report on the
"Southern Tier
Group"

The LWV Mid-
Hudson Region
Southern Tier had
its monthly
meeting at the Silk
Factory Cafe on
Friday January
20th.

This was an
instructional

meeting to learn more about the Naturalization process for new citizens in the United States. Since the LWV has an active participation group in Ulster County, Daisy Tyler, who has been one of the members who attends the ceremony of citizenship in Ulster County, gave a short talk about what is involved.



Daisy Tyler at Silk Factory, Newburgh

The ceremony takes place every three months at the Ulster County Courthouse in Kingston. It's performed by the Supreme Court Judge and the County Clerk's office. The League has been one of the groups invited to participate to distribute voter registration information to each of the new candidates.

Afterwards, League members are welcome to attend the actual swearing in of all new citizens

The clerk's office has assigned a maximum of four members to participate in each event.

Any League member who would like to participate is welcome. If you are interested, call Daisy Tyler (845-331-5103). The next ceremony will be in March. The exact date is to be announced.

Next meeting for the Southern Tier is Friday, February 20th, noon. We have a private VIP meeting room now, at the [Silk Factory](#)! If you are interested in joining us, call Cindy Lanzetta for more information on logistics! 845-236-7288

The League needs YOU !

Alert! The Nominating Committee is looking for thoughtful and helpful folks to add their insights and talents to our board for the 2023-24 year and beyond.



The Committee consists of three members that the Annual Meeting elected last June - Pat Lamanna, Jean McGarry, Kathy OConnor - plus Sheba Abraham and Cindy Bell who were appointed by the board as our bylaws require. These five will be interviewing potential candidates over the next few months and presenting a slate at the June 2023 Annual Meeting.

We know there are many hidden talents to be discovered in our growing membership and we are eager to reflect the diversity of the three counties we now serve. The pandemic limited our ability to discover these talents, so please help us find them! Contact info@lwvmidhudson.org to express your interest.

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Environmental Impact

What is NYSERDA?

NYSERDA is the acronym for New York State Energy and Research Development Authority. It was founded in 1975



to aid New Yorkers in reducing or eliminating their reliance on fossil fuels. NYSERDA does this by supporting residents with financial assistance, information, direction, analysis, funding and technical assistance in order to work toward the goal of protecting the environment and maximizing public health as well as the related fiscal well-being of New York's citizens and economy. NYSERDA measures and monitors environmental factors to keep track of the quality of air, water and other factors that affect long-term outcomes as we continue to see the effects of climate change. They also manage and monitor the very few nuclear facilities in the State.

To support New York's goals for lowering reliance of fossil fuels, NYSERDA offers programs to make it possible for any resident to examine their energy usage. It provides practical remedies and provides financial assistance for those in need. [Home Energy Efficiency Programs - NYSERDA](#)

There are many programs for multi-unit units, municipalities, health care facilities and businesses, always keeping in mind requirements that include climate justice. Trainings, resources and numerous employment opportunities are also highlighted in NYSERDA's programs.

To find out more about this organization, go to [NYSERDA - New York State Energy Research & Development Authority - NYSERDA](#)

NYSERDA Mission: "To advance clean energy innovation and investments to combat climate change, improving the health, resiliency and prosperity of New Yorkers and delivering benefits equitably to all."

I want to be sure to point out that New York State is a trailblazer in environmental policy, which is how it gets done in the world. Nothing happens without progressive policy. I am reminded that I heard New York State spoken of as a "First Mover Country" at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland in 2021. One only needs to look around to see the truth of that. I am incredibly pleased and proud to live in this place. Thanks to the many bright, active people and worthy organizations, New York is providing the path forward for others.

To make a difference yourself, choose a local or regional organization doing that work and support them any way you can.

Next month: **Who is doing the work of environmentalism in our region?**

If you have an organization you'd like to highlight, please email me at cindylwv@gmail.com.

Cynthia Bell

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News Items

**New York State
Legislature Passes**



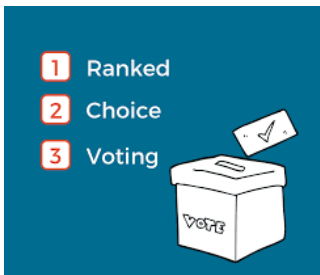
Equal Rights Amendment!

January 24, 2023

“Today we celebrate second passage of the NYS Equal Rights Amendment which brings New York one step closer to our goal of codifying basic protections for all New

Yorkers into our state’s constitution. Over 100 years ago, the League of Women Voters of New York State was founded on the premise that women deserve to be treated as equals under NYS law. The League now stands and fights for equity for all New Yorkers. In November of 2024, New Yorkers will have the power to vote to protect and prohibit discrimination by the government based on a person’s ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes. This includes protection against any action that would infringe upon a person’s reproductive autonomy or access to reproductive care. It is critical that New Yorker’s head to the polls in 2024 and vote yes for the NYS inclusive Equal Rights Amendment. Equality is not debatable.” Laura Bierman, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of NYS

We have an excellent video that simplifies the idea of **Ranked Choice Voting**. Check it



out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHRPMJmzBBw>

We also have an archive of videos done by our local LWV Mid-Hudson on YouTube!

You can access them [here](#).

You can see the New York State 2022 Redistricting Maps [HERE](#). Controversy continues on the NYS Assembly district maps.

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Editor's Note:

We want you to know that we welcome your feedback with regard to anything you read in this newsletter, or items that you would like to see. We're here for you and would like to hear from you.

Contact info@lwvmidhudson.org. Thanks.

Next Newsletter deadline is February 20th.

Also note: this and previous issues of our newsletter are available for viewing on our website lwvmidhudson.org.

info@lwvmidhudson.org

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