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April 2025

Prez Says



PREZ SAYS

Dear friends,

I won't ask if you are stressed and anxious. We are living through one of the most challenging moments in our history.

At our Newburgh meet-up this month the 95-year-old aunt of LWVMHR board member Anne Sandor, here from her home in Paris, agreed that this feels like the childhood years she spent in Germany. So unless you welcome chaos and cruelty and think that government is useless, anxiety is unavoidable.

Trying to ease my own anxiety, I looked up some quotes and especially liked this from Eleanor Roosevelt: "You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them." Not easy, but wise.

One obvious anxiety antidote is **taking action** in as effective a way as possible. This currently means welcoming opportunities to tell our elected officials how we feel but focusing, even better, on our state and local governments.

I hope you saw the March State Voter (emailed to you on March 4) and saw a link to **a letter sent to the Congressional leaders from the national and all state LWVs** on behalf of all of us. It is long and full of helpful details. It is comforting to see the issues laid out so well and to hear the appropriate tone of outrage and determination. I know that many of you are also finding some satisfaction in attending town halls and marches.

And I hope you will take advantage of our many **MEET-UPS**. There is already one happening regularly in each of our three counties and another planned for April 15, 4 pm, at the Kings Valley Diner in Kingston. There is always time for some venting, but there is also happy conversation too and plenty of discussion of issues we care about. Meet-up notes and pics get posted regularly in this monthly newsletter and you can drop in occasionally, regularly or even just once! New people - including potential members - are always welcome. Social connections are vitally important in times like these.

Our advocacy efforts have continued as we have completed or are still planning visits with all seven of our state Assembly members and all three of our state senators. If you'd like to get in on our last few, let me know. We have also visited with all three county boards of elections and all three county executives. These visits are always interesting and sometimes even surprising. We will also be scheduling meetings with many of the state level

folks in their Albany offices on May 7th- the League's Advocacy Day. We carpool and there is always room for one more. Watch for more information and plan to join us!

Meanwhile read "Your Weekly Legislative Update from LWVNYS" that arrives in your email every Friday when the legislature is meeting . It comes from our state League Executive Director, Erica Smitka, and is always very readable.

The League has weathered 105 years of challenges to our democracy already and I hope you find it eases some of your anxiety to be part of it, of us.

Dare Thompson, President

darethompson@gmail.com

845-236-3074 (preferred) 845-591-3445 (cell)



Calendar Happenings

Take Action!

April 2nd

LWVMHR Membership Committee Meeting Zoom

Noon

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86371248153?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86371248153?pwd=1TZ6JvYrg4Xvn7zleUX78loAxegBbU.1)

[pwd=1TZ6JvYrg4Xvn7zleUX78loAxegBbU.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86371248153?pwd=1TZ6JvYrg4Xvn7zleUX78loAxegBbU.1)

April 8th

6:45 PM

Special State Studies Meeting for Local League!

Information directly following this Calendar

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1)

[pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1)

April 9th

4 PM

Communications Committee Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83485777163?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83485777163?pwd=I3oZo3O0YaLwfvvCshbMklaYCft7jS.1)

[pwd=I3oZo3O0YaLwfvvCshbMklaYCft7jS.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83485777163?pwd=I3oZo3O0YaLwfvvCshbMklaYCft7jS.1)

April 11th

Dutchess Meet-up

Noon

Mahoneys, Poughkeepsie

April 15th

Woodstock/West Regional Meet-up

2:30 PM

Eve's

April 15th

4 PM

Kingston Meet-up

Kings Valley Diner, Kingston

April 17th

LWVMHR Board Meeting Zoom

4 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84927964413?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84927964413?pwd=OGRLwZEF0OixBEB5Eo1MwL5Jub3yyL.1)

[pwd=OGRLwZEF0OixBEB5Eo1MwL5Jub3yyL.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84927964413?pwd=OGRLwZEF0OixBEB5Eo1MwL5Jub3yyL.1)

April 17th

Saugerties Meet-up

6 PM

Village Diner, Saugerties

April 18th

Southern Tier Meet-up

Noon

Silk Factory, Newburgh



JOIN THE DISCUSSION

State Studies Information Session & Concurrence Meeting

Tuesday, April 8

6:45pm via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1>

Meeting ID: 886 3878 0182

Passcode: 212873

Presenter: Barbara Grosh, President, LWV of the Rochester Metro Area

LWVMHR will hold a concurrence meeting for the general membership to discuss the following LWNYS position statements:

- Rank Choice Voting
- Voting Systems Approval Process

Members may concur with one, both, or none of the position statements.



Save the date!

Join LWVMHR for a concurrence (general agreement) meeting. We will be learning about *Ranked Choice Voting & Nonpartisan Elections* as well as the results of a study on *the process used by the state Board of Elections to approve voting systems*. The position statements will be presented virtually by Barbara Grosh, President of LWV Rochester Metro Area.

All are welcome, though only LWVMHR members may concur with these proposed positions.

This information will be given to LWNYS to inform positions and/or actions in the future.

Position Statements from the first study

Ranked Choice Voting

- LWVNYS supports the use of ranked-choice voting (a.k.a., instant runoff voting), in primary, general and/or special elections to elect federal, state, and/or local officials.
- With the adoption of any electoral system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important and funding for startup and voter education should be allocated.

Nonpartisan Elections -Primary Systems that allow all registered voters to participate in the primary process, including the use of nonpartisan primaries

- LWVNYS supports changing from a closed partisan primary system to a primary system, including a nonpartisan primary system, that allows all registered voters to participate, regardless of party affiliation or lack thereof.
- The League supports the use of nonpartisan primaries to elect federal, state and local officials.

Position Statements from the second study

The League of Women Voters of New York State believes that a more transparent and open voting systems approval process would improve voter understanding of, and confidence in, our elections.

- Support for greater transparency and public input in the approval process, including increased demonstrations open to the public, followed by comment periods.
- Public demonstrations should be scheduled to provide public input earlier in the certification process.

The League of Women Voters of New York State believes that supporting the development of a publicly designed and developed new customized voting system for New York State could improve accessibility and confidence in our elections.

- Support for a change in Election Law and Code to allow for development of a publicly designed new customized voting system for use for by all voters, including those with disabilities.
- State funding should be made available to help fund the design and development process, and to assist counties purchase the new voting system once it is certified by the state BOE.

Join us on April 8th at 6:45pm.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1)

[pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88638780182?pwd=6Y91CScRFDgPW6qS8uS7eheyAFuo4R.1)

Meeting ID: 886 3878 0182

Passcode: 212873

For more information, contact Cindy Bell at cindylwv@gmail.com.



LWV Mid-Hudson Meet Ups

Dutchess Meetup

Each month, a group of League members from Dutchess, Ulster, and sometimes Orange counties, meet at Mahoney's for lunch and

conversation. Last month's conversation was flowing as we discussed the SAVE Act, upcoming voter registration events, and plans for the Women's History Month potluck. We are also working on having speakers on current topics of interest every second or third meeting. Stay tuned! Next meeting is Friday, April 11th, at noon at [Mahoney's](#) in Poughkeepsie.



SOUTHERN TIER

We will be meeting at the Silk Factory in Newburgh on **April 18th** at noon! While most of us are from Orange, Southern Dutchess and Southern Ulster, we are always open to League members and their friends. At last month's meeting we discussed a number of upcoming events and the group's most recent visit with Assemblyman Eachus.

There's much happening and we share ideas, actions and enjoy good company!

Woodstock/West Regional Meet-up Report

3/11/2025 by Cindy Bell

- **Introductions** were made and Cindy Bell went through upcoming prospective programs.
- Rachel Marco-Havens is heading the newly re-formed **Woodstock Chamber of Commerce**. She discussed Chamber status as well as the possibility of sponsoring a candidate event for town supervisor, town council and town justice in collaboration with LWVMHR. Other possible programs include civic education, naturalization support and other community-focused events, especially in this local election year.
- **SAVE Act** conversation
- **LWVUS Membership Portal** is live and members are encouraged to register when the email comes through. Nonmembers attending this gathering can join through **lwvmidhudson.org** or by mail to LWVMHR, PO Box 3564, Kingston, NY 12402.
- **Next steps:** Final version and printing of **Putting Your Vote to Work in Woodstock** should be done to prepare for local distribution. We will discuss more solid collaborative efforts with Family of Woodstock. **The next meeting is April 15 at 2:30 at Eve's**. The time change will enable Gloria Waslyn to attend.
- **Welcome** to Rachel, Susan and Angie for joining our group for the first time today. Eight people attended and, as always, many thanks go to Eve for hosting and to Angie Janecke for taking notes for this report.

Saugerties Regional Report

3/13/2025 by Cindy Bell

Upcoming **LWV Mid-Hudson Region** plans (proposed dates) were discussed.

Proposed upcoming **Saugerties** plans:

- 5/31/2025 Saugerties Library Fair 10:00am-3:00pm (set up at 9:00am)
- 10/14/25 Saugerties Town Supervisor/Town Council/Clerk candidate event
- TBA *Put your Vote to Work* handout in Saugerties- update & distribution

Collaborations with local organizations (more ideas and suggestions welcome):

- St John's Food Pantry at St. Mary's Church
- Jordan's Closet- clothing assistance
- Hope Rocks- concert for charity
- Saugerties Public Library

Discussion on how Saugerties can become more **active** again. Suggestions by other members and help welcomed for proposed and current events scheduled. Asking for assistance from formerly active members to pass along knowledge of procedure for events.

Next meeting: April 17, 6:00 PM at Village Diner in Saugerties.



Committee News

Communications Committee:

Last fall, the LWVMHR Board took a significant step forward by establishing a communications committee to improve how we connect with our members and the public. Our primary communication channels — the website, newsletter, and Facebook page — are essential tools for keeping everyone informed. The committee's mission is to ensure these platforms work together harmoniously, providing the right message through the right channel to the right audience.

Our goal is twofold: to keep our members updated on the League's activities and opportunities for involvement, and to make sure the public knows who we are and how they can engage with us when needed.

Since the committee's creation, we've already made great strides! We've developed a new member package to welcome and orient new members to

the local league. We're also expanding our use of Facebook and adding more events to our website's calendar to keep everyone in the loop.

We'd love to have more members join the committee and contribute to this important work. **We meet via Zoom every second Wednesday of the month at 4:00 p.m.**

If you're interested in learning more or want to get involved, feel free to reach out to Lisa Bretherick at lisa.bretherick@gmail.com. You can also join any of our meetings — the Zoom link is available at the top of this newsletter and on our website calendar.

If you're interested in communication, we'd love to have you on board!



Bankrupting the Business of Human Trafficking: Techniques that Work

UN High Level Side Event(virtual)
sponsored March 10, 2025

Human trafficking is a far more pervasive problem than most people think, and more often than not, takes place within religious, educational or other trusted organizations. This event focused on two topics. The first was finding traffickers through banking algorithms and use of AI. The second was identifying victims through healthcare treatment and training to spot and provide appropriate assistance. Additionally, the need for specific care and housing for victims was discussed, as normal facilities can create a situation for re-victimization.

To join the LWVUS UNGoogle Group for opportunities to learn more about a variety of topics, email Cindy Bell at cindylwv@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE

League Advocacy Day May 6th
9:30 - 4PM

Where: The Blake Annex, 1 Steuben St, Albany NY 12203

Register: [Register online here](#) or mail a check made out to the League of Women Voters of New York State to 1 Steuben St, Albany NY 12207

Cost: \$25 per person (includes lunch)

LWVNYS will host an advocacy day on May 7th in Albany, NY. Join us!

- Learn about important legislative issues and how to advocate for them
- Meet new League members from across the state
- Lobby your state legislators at the Capitol
- Enjoy lunch provided by LWVNYS



New Membership Portal

Last month, we launched our new membership system, ChapterSpot. Onboarding hundreds of Leagues to a new membership system is no easy task! As we hear from members needing help with the new portal, LWVUS is working to respond and provide assistance as quickly as possible. Additional staff have been assigned to the project to help expedite responses to your requests. **If you need membership portal support, please fill out this [online form](#).** Members can find up-to-date information on resolved and pending ChapterSpot issues [on the League Management Site](#). We appreciate the work that state and local Leagues have dedicated to the new system, and we thank you for your patience as we get everyone fully onboarded.

In League,



Dianna

President, League of Women Voters of the US

Meet Your State Legislators Visits

Dutchess Legislator Meetings

During March, Dutchess members continued their relationship with Assemblyman Anil Beephan, Jr., Assembly District 105 and Senator Rob Rolison, 39th Senate District by meeting to discuss state and local issues of importance to the League. We had productive discussions covering

environmental issues like the Bottle Bill, the Packaging Bill, and the Dutchess County Incinerator; **public protection** focused on the Fishkill Correctional Facility issues and the state-wide jail strike, as well as jail voting and polling sites; **election integrity and reform** focused on the SAVE Act and future impacts to the state, county and local budgets, funding to county boards of election needed to safeguard the electoral process, Election Registration Information Center(ERIC), and campaign finance reform.

Submitted by Fay Casatuta

Ulster County Executive Meeting

LWVMHR Meeting with UC Executive 3/11/2025

Ulster County Legislative Bldg, Kingston

2 pm- 3pm

In attendance:

Ulster County Executive Jennifer Metzger

Deputy County Executive Johanna Contreras

Chief Diversity Officer Esi M. Lewis

League members - Dare Thompson, Cindy Lanzetta, Deborah Marr & Emilie Hauser

Introductions were made. League members explained what the League of Women Voters mission is and the kind of work they do.

There was a discussion about the League's role in local Naturalization ceremonies. The League members and the County Executive and staff also spoke about a number of other issues:

- Registering voters in the Ulster County jail and working with the Sheriff's department and the Ulster County Board of Elections
- The National "SAVE ACT" and issues associated with Federal requirements for Voter Registration, Real ID, Driver's Licenses, and the possible impact of Federal National ID registration
- Questions came up concerning vaccinations and the County's role in promoting good health practices, especially in rural areas
- There was a lengthy discussion on Solid Waste and how there might be more coordination within the County (with the UCRRA) and regionally. The County has made a strong commitment to divert and reprocess as many materials as possible before the need to dispose of

items in a landfill. To that end they are purchasing a property near the Kingston Bridge to sort and reuse materials. The County is also hopeful to work with UCRRA to expand the diversion of organics to increase commercial composting in Ulster County.

As we neared the end of our meeting we asked the County representatives what role the League could have in helping good government? It was noted that "Objective nonpartisan information is needed now, more than ever". It was an extremely friendly meeting and the League members look forward to a continuing dialog with the County Executive and her staff.

Submitted by Cindy Lanzetta

Orange County

Orange County members met with State Assemblyman Christopher Eachus (NY 99) on March 21, 2025 to review League priorities. In addition to our requests, the Assemblyman provided much information on the transition plan for home healthcare clients and works that will impact upwards of a quarter-million New Yorkers. This is an important issue that we should be following in detail.

Submitted by Leslie Simons



League Member Sheba Abraham and Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino

Celebrating Women's History Month!

Every March we celebrate the achievements and history of women as part of Women's History Month. On March 24, Dutchess County members hosted **"A Celebration of Women and Community Moving Forward Together"** at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie.

It was an evening of inspiring speakers, uplifting music, community building, and delicious food!

To a full house, speakers – Erica Smitka (LWVNYS Executive Director), Sue Serino (Dutchess County Executive), Rebecca Edwards (Town of Poughkeepsie Supervisor), Yvonne Flowers (Mayor of the City of Poughkeepsie), the Honorable Tracy C. MacKenzie (Dutchess County Family Court Judge), and Patricia DeLeo (AAUW Public Policy Chair) – shared women's history, their journeys as leaders in our communities, the need to engage with our youth, and their heroes, among other inspiring

stories. Sue Serino presented the League with a Proclamation from the Dutchess County Government for Women's History Month.

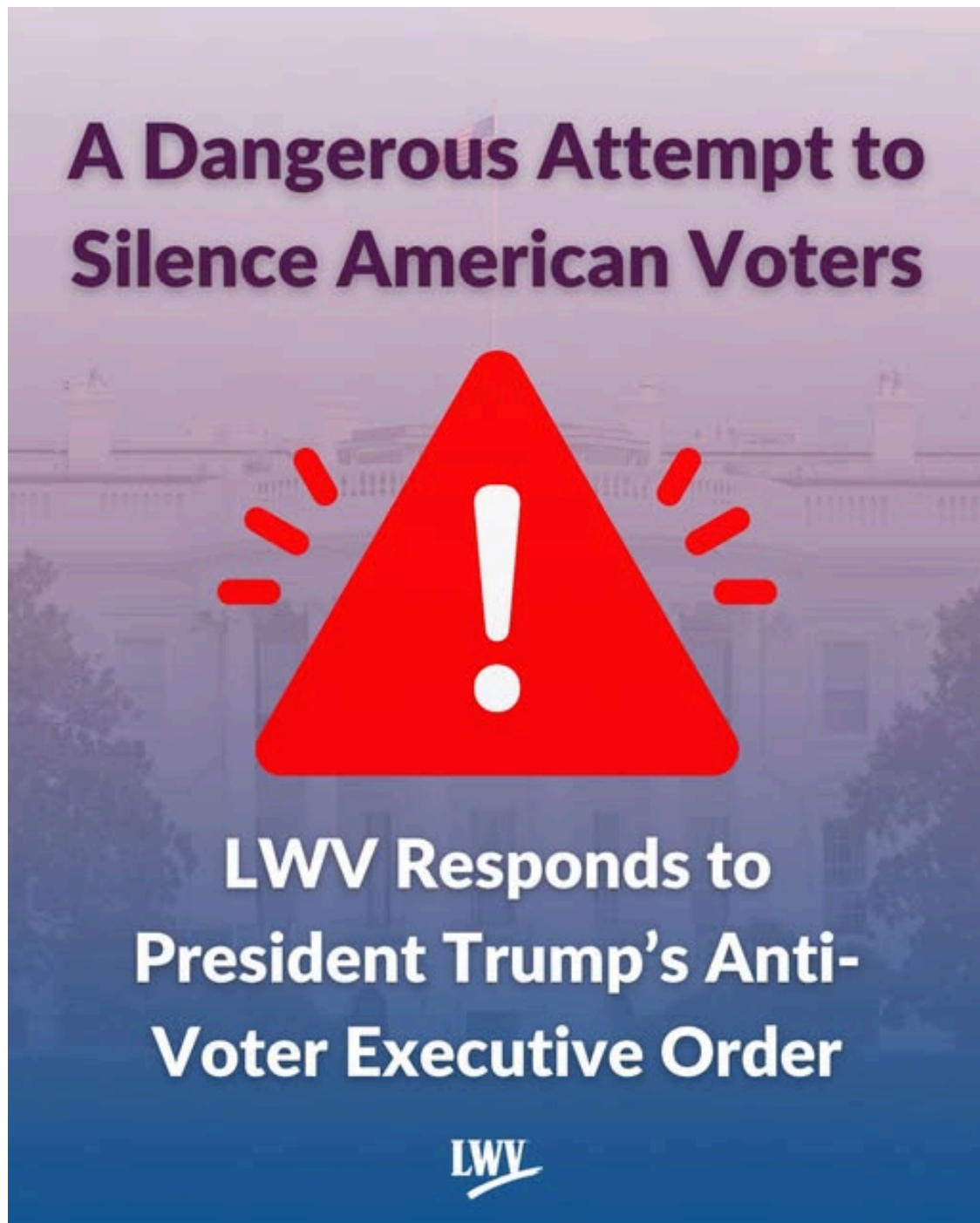
Among guests attending were League members from all counties, as well as Lisa R. Kaul (Dutchess Legislator, District 6 – Town of Poughkeepsie), Ernest Henry (City of Poughkeepsie Council Member, 1st Ward), Kenya Gadsen (former Beacon City School Board member and Vice President, former Fishkill Town Board member).

Our main objective of the event was to make connections and build community. We accomplished that and look forward in the coming months to engage and push forward in our common goals and initiatives.

Thank you to the Dutchess planning team who made that night a success!







A Dangerous Attempt to Silence American Voters: LWV Responds to President Trump's Anti-Voter Executive Order

On March 26, President Trump signed an executive order ("Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections") that threatens Americans' freedom to vote and tramples states' authority to run elections. Per the League of Women Voters US, this order is a shameful attack on American

voters — particularly women voters — and their right to participate in our democracy.

The League will pursue all avenues in fighting against this dangerous order. We will use every tool at our disposal to defend voters from unjust restrictions on their freedom to vote.

Read the League's statement [here](#).



Dutchess County Legislature, March 10, 2025 Board Meeting

“The meeting began with Minority Leader Valdes- Smith, surrounded by all women legislators, offering for adoption a proclamation acknowledging the critical (yet historically undervalued) role American women of every race, class and ethnic background have played in every sphere of American life — cultural, social, philanthropic, or political, as well as leaders of progressive social change including voting, emancipation, labor and civil rights. “

Thus begins the report by League member Jane Simkin Smith as she covers the Dutchess County Legislature as a member of the League Observer Corp. Read more about what happened on the LWVMHR Website [HERE!](#)



Keep Up With your League's Latest Local Events!

[Learn more](#)

In the News



LWVMHR Meets With Tri-Valley High School Class

Members of the League of Women Voters Mid-Hudson met with members of the Tri-Valley High School Civics & Social Justice Class on February 25th.

This is the fourth year the League has worked with teacher Matthew Haynes in an unique elective environment to learn about issues that concern High School students and act as a resource as students develop projects to address the issues and areas of need. We look forward to seeing the projects to fruition in June!



Dutchess Community College (DCC) Voter Registration

Dutchess members of the LWVMHR held their last voter registration drive at DCC for the 2024/2025 school year on March 10th and 11th. They were joined by members of the Political Science club. Together, they registered twenty-seven students. The League is looking forward to returning to campus for their Fall Falcon Days as well as other opportunities throughout the 2025/2026 school year.



Pine Bush High School Students Register to Vote

On February 13th and 20th, LWVMHR members from Orange and Dutchess Counties conducted a voter services outreach at Pine Bush High School. Both days were successful with 46 registrations collected. Staff at Pine Bush promoted the event and publicized it by way of Google news!



Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act – A New Barrier to Voting

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act (H.R.22/S.128) has been re-introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate under the guise of stopping illegal voting – it is already illegal for noncitizens to register and vote in federal or state elections. Despite unfounded claims to the contrary, there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud. The SAVE Act is designed to block eligible Americans from voting, not to protect elections.

The bill would require ***all Americans to prove their citizenship with official documents in person*** before registering to vote or updating their voter registration. Every state already requires voters to affirm or verify their citizenship. Noncitizens ***cannot legally vote*** in federal or state elections.

The bill would ***functionally eliminate mail registration*** by requiring voters registering by mail to produce citizenship documents ***in person*** to an election official before the registration deadline. It would also abolish many or all voter registration drives and online voter registration systems, which are typically treated like mail registration.

This bill ***does not protect elections***. Infact, it makes it harder for eligible Americans to vote. Under this bill,Americans would need to provide ***one*** of the following documents to register or to update their registration:

- A U.S. birth certificate
- A U.S. passport
- A certificate of naturalization
- A certificate of citizenship

For millions of Americans, accessing these documents is not simple:

- More than 21.3 million Americans lack immediate access to documentary proof of citizenship
- 140 million U.S. citizens do not have a passport
- Up to 69 million women who took their spouse's last name do not have a birth certificate matching their legal name
- Disabled Americans are already much more likely to encounter difficulty while voting compared to a nondisabled voter; more stringent requirements will just make this worse
- Citizens of color are three times more likely than white citizens to lack documentation such as birth certificates, passports, naturalization certificates, or certificates of citizenship

These barriers disproportionately impact communities already facing voting restrictions.

As noted by the LWV of the City of New York, the SAVE Act would disproportionately impact:

- ***Communities of color***, who are three times more likely to lack required documents
- ***People who changed their name***, including those who changed it after marriage or for personal reasons, and have mismatched birth records
- ***Older adults***, including those who were born at home and may not have official birth certificates
- ***People with limited financial resources***, who may struggle to afford document replacement fees or travel costs
- ***Rural communities***, where government offices are less accessible for obtaining these documents

Instead of protecting elections, this bill creates barriers that keep eligible voters from participating.

What can you do right now?

- Call and tell your congressional representatives to oppose the SAVE Act
- Call your senators and demand they protect voting rights
- Read [LWVUS Talking Points](#) and [LWVUS Call to Action](#)

From the Editor - This is still a work in progress as we figure out our new program. Stick with us as we find ways to improve this monthly Newsletter. We welcome information or articles you think would add to our members & friends knowledge of educating voters and protecting our Democracy. Deadline for next Newsletter is **April 21st**. Thank you!



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