



League of Women Voters of NYS **STATE VOTER**

March 2020

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

President's Message



We are hoping our League community is safe, healthy and staying strong during this abrupt, about face, upheaval to the conduct of our daily lives and our plans; well so many changes.

At the state League, we know that the most important action the League community can take during this pandemic is to keep our state voters informed about rescheduled elections and ongoing updates about how elections will be conducted so we can GOTV (get-out-the-vote)! The state League will keep the home page on our website and on Facebook up to date with election news and deadlines. Links to official sources are usually included. Many thanks to our office staff, working from home 7 days a week to keep up with official announcements that will affect our 2020 election schedule and procedures and get the information out to you, members and the public.

Now, what can you do? Be safe and pick up your phone. It is a great time to reach out to each other. Start a telephone tree in your League and pass on the information about election schedule changes, questions about absentee voting and early voting. Ask your League members to reach out to their book clubs, congregations and families to make sure everyone gets the information they need about elections. You can give them our website or Facebook address, or, as we get closer to the June primary, VOTE411.

We can all try something new to communicate with voters and members in this new paradigm. Take care everybody, stay strong.

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Students Inside Albany Conference



Although we had to cancel the 2020 Students Inside Albany Conference, we did offer the students an opportunity to join us on a Zoom presentation on state government and how to

be a citizen lobbyist. The presentation is posted on our website under Youth Programs for all to watch and share: <https://www.lwvnyonline.org/youth/SIA/2020/march/NYS-Politics-PPT-SIA-2020.pdf>

We hope that some of the students who are not current seniors may consider joining us next year for SIA!

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Cancelled Events

We are sad to report that we have cancelled a number of our spring events including:

- Regional Training Workshops
- Students Inside Albany Conference
- Annual Advocacy Training and Lobby Day

Champion of Change: Barbara Bartoletti



The event honoring Barbara Bartoletti, former Legislative Director for over 40 years, was a huge success and lots of fun. **The**

video of the conversation between Barbara and Liz Benjamin is posted on our state League homepage, as well as photos from the evening. A big thank you to the NYS Archives Partnership Trust who co-sponsored the event and provided critical help for us throughout the planning. Also a big thank you to our co-chairs, Aimee Allaud, Joanne Esposito, Barb Thomas and Dare Thompson, as well as the full committee, for their leadership on the event.

League Appeal

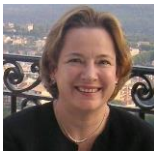
While we are all home working, we are still busy planning for the upcoming elections and monitoring the legislature and their proceedings on the budget. We are gathering ideas and will share templates and samples with all as we develop new ways to encourage all to vote. Vote411 is live and we will continue to share updates and notices there, as well as on our website and Facebook pages. And, our expenses don't end now - please consider supporting our efforts to educate all voters on how and when to vote. You can donate online at:

https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/FI4NIPwK6c-KNn60o0_pWA?t=1584993272

Thank you for everything you do for the League. We can't be effective without your support!

Issues and Advocacy

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Constitutional Convention Position Update

At the June 2019 convention, delegates approved an update that would delete the Constitutional Convention position's first sentence to confirm state Board responsibility to apply the position to support or oppose using the criteria in the position. Update materials were sent out in September 2019 and responses were due March 1, 2020.



Although the geographical distribution requirement was met by the 22 Leagues who responded, the Yes results failed to meet the 2/3 agreement necessary to drop the first sentence of the current Constitutional Convention position. The position remains as written. In addition to 22 Leagues, 7 members submitted individual responses for the first time under the new process approved last year. The responses were almost evenly divided between Yes and No.

Under the new Study and Update Process adopted by the state League board in 2019, members, local Leagues and ILOs may suggest a future update to the position. If a member or local League would prefer a position that does not allow the state League to take a position, or a position that only allows the state League to take a position relying on a separate consensus process to determine member agreement, then the local League or member may initiate and/or become part of a future update. A future update could seek to establish member agreement with either of these options

Spring Primary Election Postponement

The League worked with our good government and voting rights partners to postpone the April primary and special elections to June. We sent out a [statement](#) and [letter](#) calling on the legislature and Governor to take action and consolidate the April elections to June.

We were successful in our efforts and the **April special elections and primary were postponed and consolidated with the June state and congressional primaries**. Village and school board elections have also been postponed until after June 1st but dates for those elections have not yet been set. See section below on some recent questions and answers on this postponement.

The League is continuing to work to expand the list of "excuses" to vote absentee to include public health risks. Expanding the reasons for absentee voting will allow more voters to have the option to vote via absentee in June.

Legislative Actions Related to COVID-19

This month the League supported a [paid sick leave](#) bill to guarantee paid leave for New Yorkers under quarantine. You can find information about the reform on A Better Balance's website [here](#). The bill has been signed into law and the League and the New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition sent a [letter](#) to the Governor asking for clarity on certain aspects of the legislation and making recommendations for expansions to the bill.

The legislature also passed a [bill](#) to allow for the extension of the deadline to submit petition signatures to qualify for the June primary. The bill extended the deadline set by the Governor last week. The number of petition signatures required to qualify for the ballot was also reduced by 30%. Candidate filings are available on county board of elections websites and on the state board of elections website [here](#).

The Assembly and Senate are continuing to work on reforms related to COVID-19 including a bill to expand absentee voting to allow anyone concerned about the virus to request an absentee ballot. The two houses have passed a resolution to allow for remote voting on legislation but are currently continuing their work in Albany.

When performing legislative duties, the League believes that legislators must continue to ensure the greatest level of transparency to the public. The League sent [recommendations](#) to the legislature on best practices to maintain transparency and accountability during this time of isolation. We will continue to update members of any urgent changes.

Primary and Spring Elections Postponement FAQs

Governor Cuomo has introduced two Executive Orders to postpone spring elections because of the outbreak of COVID-19 in New York State.

The Executive Orders are available to read on the Governor's website <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20212-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/EO_202.13.pdf

Here are some common questions that have been raised regarding the postponement of elections.

Which elections have been postponed?

The Executive Order consolidates the April 28th presidential primary and special election (27th Congressional District, 12th Assembly District, 31st Assembly District, 136th Assembly District, and 50th Senate District) with the June 23rd state and congressional primary.

School board and village elections have also been postponed but these elections have not been scheduled. The Executive Order states that these elections must occur after June 1st.

We will continue to keep voters updated about election date changes in New York State.

Did the registration dates change?

- May 29 is the last day to postmark a registration form for the June primary; it must be received by the board of elections by June 3.
- May 29 is the last day to register in person at your county board of elections.
- For a voter who just wants to vote in one of the Special Elections happening in NYC, or elsewhere, the deadline is June 13th.

Did absentee voting change?

The dates to apply for an absentee ballot have been changed to coincide with the dates of the June 23rd primary but the rules around voting via absentee have not changed.

- June 16 is the last day to postmark application for the primary ballot. (Absentee ballot applications are available here: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html>)
 - June 22 is the last day to apply in person for primary ballot at your county board of elections.
 - June 22 is the last day to postmark ballot, it must be received by the county board of elections no later than June 30th.
 - June 23 is the last day to deliver primary ballot in person to county board, by close of polls.
-

Voters must select one of the following reasons for requesting to vote by absentee:

- * absence from county or New York City on election day
- * temporary illness or physical disability
- * permanent illness or physical disability
- * duties related to primary care of one or more individuals who are ill or physically disabled
- * resident or patient of a Veterans Health Administration Hospital
- * detention in jail/prison, awaiting trial, awaiting action by a grand jury, or in prison for a conviction of a crime or offense which was not a felony

Your absentee ballot materials will be sent to you at least 32 days before federal, state, county, city or town elections in which you are eligible to vote. If you applied after this date, your ballot will be sent immediately after your completed and signed application is received and processed by your local board of elections.

What if I already voted via absentee for the special elections and presidential primary?

At this time the Executive Order does not address that question. Election officials are predicting that all absentee ballots will be preserved and counted in June, but we will have to wait for more guidance on this question.

Watch for more information and details as they become available - we'll share by email, post on our state website and Facebook pages.

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