



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF BUFFALO/NIAGARA

your
VOTER

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September 2020

President

Terri Parks

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Barbara Gunderson

Office Hours

Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Please call before coming to the office.

LWVBN website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Voter is published 11 times a year. October Voter copy is due Monday, September 14. Send copy to Nancy DeTine at lwvbn@lwvbn.org

**Election 2020 and Your Health Care:
What to Know Before You Vote**

Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Time: 6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Place: Via Zoom

Don't miss this important and FREE virtual event! Experts from across New York State will help us understand what's at stake for health care policy at both federal and state levels. Topics to be covered:

- How could the outcome of the presidential election impact our health care?
- What about policy at the state level, including Medicaid and the New York Health Act?
- What's not on the table, but should be? Which options not supported by either presidential candidate could make a difference for health care access?

Moderator: Dave Debo, WBFO News Director

Panelists: Elisabeth Benjamin, Vice President of Health Initiatives, Community Service Society of New York; Bill Hammond, Senior Fellow for Health Policy, Empire Center for Public Policy; Lara Kassel, Coordinator, Medicaid Matters; Katie Robbins, Director, Campaign for New York Health; and Melva Visser, Adjunct Professor of Community and School Health, Canisius College (current), and Vice President Community Health, Kaleida Health (retired)

Thanks to our co-sponsors:

**Buffalo•Toronto
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Health Foundation
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[Register here](#)

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 Report and Board Actions

There have been two board meetings since my last report. While we continue to work remotely, there is much happening with the League as we head into a contentious election. Locally, there are few races in our two counties: district attorney in both Erie and Niagara Counties and sheriff in Niagara County. Barbara Jezioro will post those races on Vote411 for us.

The office is still closed as of mid-August. The board approved removal of broken and damaged furniture as well as old computers and other unusable items from the office and attic. The office has received a deep cleaning. The Network of Religious Communities awaits the decision of its board of trustees about the procedures that will need to be followed for use of shared meeting spaces. We will notify our members by email when we are officially open again. Until that time, please contact Barbara Gunderson at lwvbn@lwvbn.org or 716-986-4898 to arrange for any materials you need from the office.

Barbara Gunderson accepted the office manager's position with the understanding that she might resign within a year. She has submitted her resignation effective December 31, 2020. Of course, she plans to continue her work with the League as Voter Service Committee chair. A committee is working on finding a new person for this part-time position. Please contact the League office if you have any interest or suggestions.

The board is also considering a possible move to a different office location and has appointed a committee to investigate possibilities. Again, if you have any suggestions, please contact the League office.

We have created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee as a vehicle to turn the aims and goals of LWVBN into action. Liz Zausmer has completed the training provided by the national League and earned a \$500 grant for us to use in this work. She has begun working with a small committee to refine and promote an action plan; see her article in this Voter for more details.

Board assignments and off board specialists were approved at the July board meeting. The current list will be shared with the email version of the Voter and noted on our website: www.lwvbn.org. The board appointed Janet Zehr as a member of the Finance Committee at its August meeting.

Barbara Gunderson has contacted the Erie County Board of Elections and volunteered our League to assist in ballot opening for the November election. We will seek volunteers when we have details to share.

Terri Parks

Seeking a New Office Manager – Come Work for the League!

Here's a chance for you (or someone you know) to help advance the important local efforts of America's premier nonpartisan grass-roots political organization. The League is seeking a self-starter with good interpersonal and communication skills, plus the ability to multitask and work independently. Responsibilities include clerical tasks, light bookkeeping, and working with our board of directors, volunteers and the public. Applicants must be proficient in Microsoft Office and QuickBooks. Approximately 12 hours per week, plus occasional evening and weekend hours. Applicants should submit a resume with a cover letter and three references by Friday, September 18, 2020, via email to lwvbn@lwvbn.org or by mail to LWVBN, 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209.

GOTV Postcards Target Lovejoy Voters

In September, we will mail 3,000 postcards aimed at boosting participation in Buffalo's Lovejoy District, a historically low-turnout area. To identify iconic neighborhood images, the Get Out The Vote Steering Committee consulted the district's Common Council member and others in the community. The postcard shown here, created by talented volunteer designer Krysta Doerfler, pictures Lovejoy's landmark firehouse. On the back, League volunteers will write and sign a sentence or two encouraging recipients to vote.

Did you volunteer to help?

As soon as the postcards are printed, you will receive an email. You can arrange to pick up your supply of 20, 50, 100 or more cards in the parking lot behind the League office, at a predetermined time. Or we can deliver your order to your home. The League will then collect finished cards and add postage and address labels.

It's not too late!

We have 23 postcard writers so far, but we can always use more! It should take no more than an hour to write 30 postcards, and we'll supply sample scripts for you to choose from. If you'd like to help out, please email Barbara Gunderson at lwvbn@lwvbn.org. Thanks so much for your help with our GOTV campaign! And thanks to the League of Women Voters of New York State for a supporting grant.

Barbara Gunderson



LOVEJOY
Votes!
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3

VOTE EARLY October 24 – November 1
Visit elections.erie.gov or call 716-858-8891 to request an absentee ballot.

Committee Updates

Waterfront: Meetings Resume in October

There will be issues to consider in the fall, so our group plans to resume meetings, beginning Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 2:00 pm. We hope to meet in person, but expect to meet via Zoom. Stay tuned for news, and do practice social distancing along our fabulous Buffalo waterfront!

Gladys Gifford, Chair

Money In Politics: Have You Been Counted?

Every 10 years the Constitution mandates the taking of a census, a count of all persons living in the United States for the purpose of determining the number of legislators each state will have in the House of Representatives. The total number of members in the House of Representatives is set at 435, so every 10 years the number per state may change according to the census count. It is estimated that after the 2020 Census, New York State will lose one or possibly two congressional seats, not because we have lost population, but because we have not gained as many people as other states. The census also determines the share of millions of dollars in federal funds each state will receive. The loss of representation and of critical federal dollars prods every state, especially those like New York, to make every effort to ensure there is not a census undercount.

This year's census has become especially contentious because of the federal government's determination to change the rules by eliminating certain people from being counted. The first attempt was in 2019 with the administration's decision to add a "citizenship" question to the census form. This effort was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court earlier in the year. Undeterred, the government moved in July to exclude undocumented immigrants from the count, a move that would burden states like New York that have high numbers of the undocumented, primarily persons of color, young people, and the poor. This latest move is currently being challenged in court. Finally, the administration decided to lower the count by stopping all census taking activities on September 30, not on October 31 as was originally planned.

The League is opposed to these efforts to undercount the census. We are asking all members to contact their elected representatives and request support for a fair and complete census count. Contact information is printed in our "They Represent You" brochure. More information on the census is at [2020Census.gov](https://www.2020census.gov).

The MIP Committee and the Local Government Committee are working together on redistricting in Niagara and Erie Counties and in the City of Buffalo (which depends, of course, on the census numbers). Redistricting begins early in 2021 and we are preparing now. We invite all members to join us in these activities. Redistricting happens only once in a decade, and we want to get it right.

Janet Massaro, Chair

Great Decisions: Artificial Intelligence

Great Decisions will meet via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 3. The topic will be Artificial Intelligence and Data and Karen Keaton will be our discussion leader. The Foreign Policy Association has this to say about this topic: "Policymakers in many countries are developing plans and funding research in artificial intelligence (AI). Global growth is slowing, and not surprisingly, many policymakers hope that AI will provide a magic solution. The EU, Brazil, and other Western countries have adopted regulations that grant users greater control over their data and require that firms using AI be transparent about how they use it. Will the U.S. follow suit?" This promises to be an interesting and relevant topic. Contact Fran Holmes at lwvbn@lwvbn.org if you have any questions. An email link will be sent out to Great Decisions members a day or two in advance of the September 3 date.

Fran Holmes

Watch for our GOTV bus signs!

For the first time ever, our League has invested in a transit advertising campaign to boost voter turnout. Thanks to Maureen Glose and the designers at Lamar Transportation, and our volunteer designer Krysta Doerfler, the attention-grabbing message pictured here will appear on 19 buses leaving the Babcock Garage each day during September and October through Election Day on November 3. Four large signs will be posted on bus sides, and 15 tail signs will appear the backs. The buses will travel to Clinton/Bailey, Cheektowaga, Lancaster, West Seneca, Lovejoy and ECC South, to name a few routes.



This important effort by our Get Out the Vote Steering Committee will reassure hundreds of people that their votes count, while reminding them of the date to vote and telling them to visit Vote411.org. We want to thank PUSH Buffalo, the NAACP, the League of Women Voters of New York State and individual donors for their generous contributions to this public service effort.

Liz Zausmer, Chair

Join Our New Zoom Discussion Group!

Though we can't meet face to face, we can still get together for a lively exchange! Marian Deutschman and Janet Massaro invite you to join our new book/article discussion group via Zoom. Open to all members, our first one-hour session will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 10. Our first reading is both short and substantive – **Back to the Jungle** by Jane Mayer, which appeared in the July 20, 2020, issue of **The New Yorker** magazine. Focusing on the meat and chicken industry, Mayer's reporting touches on many current issues League members are interested in, among them money in politics, immigration, unions, the pandemic and more. Want to join in? Please send an email to Marian or Janet (lwvbn@lwvbn.org) and we'll send you the article and further details.

Marian Deutschman

LWVBN creates new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

So what is all this talk about DEI? Are these modern-day buzzwords? Or are they concepts that need to be explored and ideals that need to be incorporated into the workings of an organization that seeks to serve the democratic process?

Several years ago, the League of Women Voters of the United States set out to have members at the national, state and local levels become aware of the need for diversity in the membership and in the population we represent and serve. The LWVUS knew that diversity was not enough, but that we had to provide equity and true inclusion. This means that new voices and ideas need to be incorporated into our group and our programming. We need to be looking to work with people who share the League's values.

At last, the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara has a DEI Committee, and we encourage you to join. We discussed our vision and mission at our first meeting, and will also be developing an action plan. Our next meeting will take place via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

If you would like to learn more about DEI, you will find good source material on the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org. Click on the League Management button at the bottom of the home page.

Liz Zausmer, Chair



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

September 2020

Note: Due to social distancing and stay-at-home practices, meetings are subject to change and may take place via phone or computer. Please contact the committee chair for the latest information.

Tuesday, September 1, 4:00 p.m.
Program, Issues & Events Committee
Bidwell Parkway

Thursday, September 3, 10:00 a.m.
Great Decisions
via Zoom

Tuesday, September 8, 7:00 p.m.
DEI Committee
via Zoom

Wednesday, September 9, 2:00 p.m.
Local Government
TBA

Thursday, September 10, 7:30 p.m.
Book Discussion Group
via Zoom

Monday, September 14, 4:00 p.m.
Board of Directors
via Zoom

Friday, September 18, 1:00 p.m.
Money in Politics
via teleconference

Monday, September 21, 7:00 p.m.
GOTV Steering Committee
TBA

Thursday, September 24, 1:30 p.m.
Education Committee
TBA

Wednesday, October 14, 2:00 p.m.
Waterfront Committee
TBA

**Check the calendar on our website for updates.
Please remember to wear your League badge to all League events.**