

President

Lori Robinson
president@lwvbn.org

LWVBN website

www.lwvbn.org

LWVNYS website

www.lwvny.org

LWVUS website

www.lwv.org

Office

1272 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
716-986-4898
Fax 716-882-3797
Email lwvbn@lwvbn.org

Office Manager

Sue Kelley

Office hours

Mon-Wed: Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Always call before going to the office

The Voter will be published six times this year. Copy for the March-April Voter is due by February 10 to Terri Parks at lwvoter@verizon.net.

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara cordially invite you to:

LWVBN Membership Meeting

February 22, 2025

10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

*Network of Religious Communities
(League office)*

1272 Delaware Avenue

Buffalo, NY 14209

The meeting will provide an orientation for new members and program planning for 2025.

R.S.V.P. to lwvbn@lwvbn.org

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 Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy New Year! It is a time to be grateful for all that we have and a time to express gratitude for all the people continuing to work for democracy. And we carry on... I always have high hopes for the New Year. People have shared exciting ideas for going forward. Our League leaders are reviewing 2024 activities and incorporating updates for 2025. We also have very important local elections in 2025, for one the mayor of Buffalo. I believe the League needs to stay visible, accessible and engaged in our local government issues.

A shout out and thank you to Chris Cavarello and Julie Wise for their excellent party planning! We had 38 members and friends attend the Holiday Party with Dr. Leah Angel Daniel presenting the awesome work she is doing with Fostering Greatness, <https://fosteringgreatnessinc.org>. Please check their website and let's support her work as we are able.

Do we have any Girl Scouts? We have an opportunity to work with the Girl Scouts of Western New York and their "Promote the Vote" programming. If you are interested in getting this going, please contact me at president@lwvbn.org.

We have applied for two grants from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Fund. One is for a coloring book with student artwork with the theme of voting and democracy; the other is for Caring for Caregivers, to provide a respite "lunch and learn" opportunity. We will keep you informed if we receive the grants and how you can get involved.

Watch for our new website in January! Please be sure to check your spam for emails from the LWV of Buffalo/Niagara as new platforms are being used to send email messages and may end up there.

As always, please contact me at president@lwvbn.org with any questions, concerns, or great ideas regarding our local program. I look forward to seeing you on February 22 at the Membership Meeting.

*In League,
Lori Robinson*

P.S.: Thank you for continuing to follow LWVBN on social media and sharing our posts with your networks. This outreach provides our League with essential visibility, and helps to spread the word about making democracy work!

Naturalization Ceremonies

Thanks to 16 League members who volunteered for naturalization ceremonies from January through December 2024. In concert with our partners at the Erie County Board of Elections we greeted 745 new citizens and successfully registered 692 on the day of their naturalization. The other new citizens chose to take their forms home and talk to their families before they filed their forms. Citizens were welcomed to the U.S. from many countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burma, Canada, China, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

Our volunteers were Mary Bisson, Eileen Cassidy, Sharon Cramer, Ramona Gallagher, Amy Moritz, Deborah Shiffner, Janet Goodsell, Suzanne Thomas, Mary Lou Enser, Lori O'Day, Barbara Weitzner-Lin, Angela Kelschenbach, Beverly Painter, Julie Wise, Timothy Priano, and Mike Egan.

The League plays a vital role in registering voters at naturalization ceremonies and thanks to all of you who make it happen.

Deborah Shiffner, Naturalization Ceremonies Coordinator

Voter Identification (ID) Considerations

When I voted in November 2024, I heard many people asking whether they needed ID to cast their ballot. In fact, voting in New York State does not require IDs. As has been the practice for many years, at your local voting site, poll workers compare the signatures of New Yorkers to verify their identities. It's that simple.

In contrast, federal law requires a valid form of ID – such as a driver's license or Social Security number – to register to vote. This has been required since 2002 when Congress passed the Help America Vote Act.

Voting rights and accessibility advocates who back free and robust elections argue that mandating IDs at the polls would block eligible citizens from participating in democracy.

Photo ID laws deprive many voters of their right to vote, reduce participation, and are antithetical to the goal of including more Americans in the democratic process. Many Americans do not have one of the forms of government-issued photo identification that some state laws list as acceptable for voting. These voters are disproportionately low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Such voters more frequently cannot afford or cannot obtain the underlying documents that are a prerequisite to obtaining a government-issued photo ID card.

Senate and Assembly Republicans in New York repeatedly proposed legislation requiring voter ID in the last legislative session. And given that Republicans will occupy the White House and will be the majority in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate in 2025, there's a good chance they will propose a federal law that requires government-issued photo ID in order to cast your ballot.

Nan Haynes

Introducing the 2024-2025 Nominating Committee

A Call to Leadership

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara is excited to announce the formation of our Nominating Committee! This dedicated group of individuals is committed to identifying and supporting passionate members who are ready to take on leadership roles within our organization. The committee members are: Amy Moritz, Timothy Priano, Amy DiChristina, Marian Deutschman and Ramona Gallagher. Together we bring diverse perspectives, expertise and a shared vision to help shape the future of LWVBN.

Why join the board of directors? Being a board member is more than a title – it's an opportunity to drive meaningful change, make strategic decisions and contribute to the long-term success of our mission. As a board member, you will help guide the direction and priorities of the organization, collaborate with a network of associates and talented peers and play a pivotal role in advancing our mission and goals.

How to get involved: We are accepting nominations for board positions! Positions to be filled include president, treasurer, and several at-large board seats. Board training is provided. Whether you're a long-term member or new to our community, we encourage you to step forward – or name someone you believe embodies the leadership and dedication our organization needs. To learn more about the roles, responsibilities and nomination process, please contact Ramona Gallagher.

Let your voice be heard and help us build a stronger, more vibrant future for LWVBN. Nominations will close on February 15, 2025, so don't wait – take the first step toward leadership today.

Ramona Gallagher, Nominating Committee Chair

Great Decisions

The League-sponsored Great Decisions discussion group is assessing continuing in 2025, dependent on sufficient interest. The group meets from March through October and each month discusses a chapter from the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions booklet. The books are available at the FPA website (https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions) and cost \$35 plus shipping, handling and tax. We meet at 10:00 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month, via Zoom, for approximately two hours. The topics for 2025 are listed below and are always relevant to world events. Consider joining for some or all of the sessions.

Great Decisions 2025 Topics

American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads, G. John Ikenberry. *This chapter will explore the contours of the U.S. foreign policy debate as it plays out in a world of multiple and escalating crises and domestic polarization.*

U.S. Changing Leadership of the World Economy, Daniel Drezner. *Under President Biden, the U.S. has advanced new ideas about trade, technology, industrial policy, competition with China, and the organization of the world economy. For most of the post-war era, the U.S. has tied its global leadership to cooperative agendas aimed at creating a more open world trading system, but that has apparently come to an end. What are America's options and opportunities as a leader of the world economy? How will America's "foreign policy for the middle class" and strategic competition with China impact its leadership role? How can the post-war rules and institutions of the world economy be made safe for economic nationalism and great power competition?*

U.S.-China Relations, Thomas J. Christensen. *Washington's relations with Beijing have reached an ominous low ebb. Both American political parties have identified China as the country's preeminent geopolitical challenger and, in the eyes of many, a systemic threat. What is driving this deterioration of Sino-American relations, and what are America's strategic options in the face of Chinese power and ambition?*

India: Between China, the West, and the Global South, Leslie Vinjamuri. *India is an emerging major power in world affairs, occupying a pivotal position between China, the United States, and the Global South. Its population size, economy, and geopolitical location ensure that it will be an influential voice in debates and political struggles over global order. What are India's choices and opportunities for regional and global leadership? How will it maneuver between China and the United States, and what is its role as a voice of the Global South? What opportunities exist for Washington to work with India?*

International Cooperation on Climate Change, Josh Busby. *The 2015 Paris Agreement established a UN-sponsored framework for negotiations on climate change and global warming. In subsequent COP meetings, experts and political leaders have come together seeking common cause for this growing global crisis. What is the future of these efforts, and what have they yielded? What is the U.S. role in fostering cooperation on climate change? In a divided country, what are the possible futures for American policy leadership?*

The Future of NATO and European Security, Kori Schake. *European security is more uncertain than it has been for decades. Putin's Russia has launched a war with Ukraine on its doorstep, and America's uncertain role as leader of NATO and security provider has been called into question with the failure of Congress to pass supplemental military support for Ukraine. What are Europe's options, and how might developments on both sides of Western Europe – in Ukraine and across the Atlantic – impact its choices? What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas?*

AI and American National Security, Julie George. *The AI revolution is the leading edge of a larger high-tech revolution, which promises to transform the world. Experts argue that international cooperation is needed to expand the opportunities these new technologies hold while protecting societies from their dangers. What are the key policy debates in this area, and what are the opportunities and limits on global AI rules of the road? How will the AI revolution impact American national security? What are its policy options to secure the benefits of AI and guard against its dangers?*

American Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead, Daniel Kurtzer. *The war in Gaza has brought the region to a crossroads. What are the possible outcomes of the war, and how might the*

United States use its influence to shape a long-term settlement that leaves both Israel and the Palestinians in a better position? How might Arab states in the wider region be brought into a settlement? What are America's interests in the Middle East and how can it advance them?

Fran Holmes will coordinate the program. Please contact me for further information and/or if you want to be included.

Fran Holmes, Great Decisions Coordinator

LWVBN Awards Recognize Outstanding Member Contributions

Awards will be presented at the Annual Meeting

The Joan K. Bozer Leadership Award recognizes outstanding League leadership that reflects some of the many qualities that Joan demonstrated in her long experience as a League and community leader. We selected five key characteristics exhibited by Joan that we feel are essential qualities for recognition: Ethical, Innovative, Resourceful, Respected, Steadfast. Please submit a paragraph of up to 250 words that describes how your nominee embodies these characteristics. Be sure to include each characteristic as you write about your nominee.

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara LEE Award is presented to a League member who has made a Long-Term Commitment to the League with Energy and Excellence – in short, the initials LEE. The award honors Lenore Tetkowski, Leonore Lambert, and Lenore Banks. Please submit a paragraph of up to 250 words about your nominee in which you note the approximate number of years the person has served the League actively, and give examples of her/his Energy and Excellence in League activity.

Please email completed nominations to lwvoter@verizon.net or mail them to the League office by February 28, 2025. Be sure your name is noted as the nominator. Please feel free to contact Terri Parks at lwvoter@verizon.net if you need help with your nominations.

We also invite you to become a member of the committee to select this year's LWVBN award recipients. We will meet by Zoom and expect to need no more than two meetings. To volunteer, contact Terri Parks.

Terri Parks, League Award Chair

2024-2025 Federal Judiciary Study

At the 2024 LWVUS convention, the delegates voted to proceed with a one-year Study of the Federal Judiciary. The scope of the study is to develop a League of Women Voters position on the federal judiciary as an essential component of U.S. democracy. The study purposes address concerns and clarification of judicial accountability, transparency, independence and ethics. It addresses the Supreme Court as well as other Article III federal courts.

Our League is participating in this study and will hold a consensus meeting in late March or early April. In addition, we may have some discussion opportunities when the resources have been published on the LWVUS Management site. You may want to check out the current resources. To access the study materials, go to www.lwv.org, scroll down the page to LEAGUE MANAGEMENT and click on it. In the menu on the top right side of the new page click on Content Library. Enter Judicial study in the search box and click on go. Scroll down the topics list and you'll reach "2024-2025 Federal Judiciary Study Process, Committee, and Resources." (I bookmarked that so I don't need to go through the whole search process again.)

You may want to view the recording of the Kickoff Webinar from November 20, 2024. I found it quite helpful. The committee chair gave a clear explanation about the goals of the study. LWVUS will also host a National Town Hall on the Federal Judiciary in January, TBA. There are several resources posted already.

Please notify the League office if you are interested in participating in this important and interesting opportunity by email at lwvbn@lwvbn.org or by phone at 716-986-4898.

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for 2025 and Beyond

As we enter 2025, our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is excited to announce a renewed focus and a new name for our efforts: Community Partnerships. This reimagined approach reflects our commitment to fostering meaningful collaborations with organizations and individuals to address systemic inequities, amplify diverse voices, and ensure that everyone feels valued and included.

Why Community Partnerships? The challenges we face as a society require collective action. Inequities in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities persist, particularly among underserved and historically marginalized communities. By embracing the spirit of partnership, we can leverage the strength of our diverse community to address these issues and build a more equitable future.

Our goals are simple yet profound:

- Promote Equity: Collaborate with communities to break down systemic barriers and create access to essential resources.
- Enhance Diversity: Engage voices from all walks of life, ensuring representation across cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Foster Inclusion: Actively involve community members in decision-making, ensuring their perspectives are not just heard but acted upon.

A New Era of Collaboration. Through Community Partnerships, we aim to build on our past successes while setting a bold vision for the future. Our initiatives will prioritize the following areas:

- Education: Working with local schools and colleges to ensure all students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, have access to high-quality education and opportunities to succeed.
- Economic empowerment: Partnering with organizations to create pathways for economic mobility, such as workforce development programs and support for minority-owned businesses.
- Healthcare access: Collaborating with local healthcare providers to address disparities in care and outcomes, particularly in underserved areas.

Preparing for Change. In light of potential challenges to DEI policies at the state and federal levels, we recognize the importance of resilience and adaptability. Our strategy includes:

- Advocacy: Partnering with organizations like the ACLU to support efforts protecting civil rights and inclusive policies.
- Community engagement: Hosting forums and workshops to foster dialogue and awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Educational outreach: Providing resources and training to help schools and workplaces continue fostering equity within legal and societal constraints.

A Call to Action. Community Partnerships is more than a name – it's a movement. We invite all members of our community, including allied organizations, educators, business leaders, and individuals, to join us in this mission. Together, we can resist potential rollbacks to progress and ensure that the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion remain at the heart of our society.

What's next? We will officially launch this initiative at a special meeting at 12:30 p.m. on January 13, 2025. This gathering will showcase ongoing projects, provide opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals and outline how you can get involved. As we embark on this journey, let us remember that meaningful change is a collective endeavor. By working together, we can create a future where everyone – regardless of background – has the opportunity to thrive.

Join us. Partner with us. Lead with us. For more information or to get involved, please contact Timothy Priano. Together, let's build bridges for equity and inclusion. ****Community Partnerships**** invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting second Monday of every month at 12:30 p.m.

Timothy Priano, Community Partnerships Chair

June-November 2024 LWVBN Volunteers to Get Out the Vote

League members and friends exerted impressive efforts to register and encourage voting this year. Many of the people in the list below helped in many of those efforts; some folks helped one or a few times. We cannot calculate the number of hours for this year's work, but can say a huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped us in any way. Every person here has made a positive difference in the total votes in Erie and Niagara Counties.

Araya Abrianna	Jenica Faye	JoAnn Mecca	Jahiyah Simmons
Hamdi Ahmed	Jill Fondillier	Sally Metzger	Jola Simon
Jim Anderson	Patsy Foster	Patti Meyer-Lee	Irene Sipus
Katie Bales	Judith Frank	Lillis McClean	Angela Stockman
Wendy Barth	Ramona Gallagher	Kathleen McCormick	Brooke Sumeriski
Ellen Marie Beagle	Mary Gartland	Kathleen McLaughlin	Suzanne Thomas
Laurie Besch	Janet Goodsell	Ellen Neumaier	Lyle Toohey
Julie Bielecki	Barbara Gunderson	Beth Niederpruem	Marjorie Tritto
Mary Bisson	Chris Hanotte	Lois O'Brien	Anne Venuto
Linda Brigance	Patrice Hanotte	Terri Parks	Brayden Wall
Joyce Bruyere	Bonnie Hartman	Morgan Payan	Judy Weidemann
Nadine Carlson	Cindy Havey	Tom Petrocelli	Melissa Weiksnar
Eileen Cassidy	Gigi Helliwell	Fin Pirrone	Barbara Weitzner-Lin
Chris Cavarello	Robin Hendler	Timothy Priano	Julie Wise
Deborah Cohen	Jennifer Hoffman	Lily Proulx-Scandrone	Christopher Wright
Joan Coleman	Debra Holahan	Genevieve Rados	Liz Zausmer
Sharon Cramer	Judy Huber	Marlowe Reddick	Ann Zawicki
Joseph Dee	Alana Jacowitz	Dayseon Richerson	
Cathy Dempsey-Sims	Beth Kaufman	Lori Robinson	
Bernard Dent	Kathleen Keenan-Takagi	Keith Robinson	
Nancy DeTine	Kathleen Kennedy	Alberta Roman	
Joyce DiChristina	Becca LaCivita	Ramsay Ross	
Caoimhe Dudgeon	Janet Lenicheck	Embri Sanders	
Jaylen Edwards	Renee Masters	Deborah Shiffner	
Mike Egan	Neahsia Maye	Estelle Siener	

Barbara Gunderson, Voter Services Chair



1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January-February 2025

Monday, January 13, 12:30 p.m.
Community Partnerships
via Zoom

Monday, January 13, 2:30 p.m.
Speakers Bureau
LWVBN Office

Monday, January 13, 4:00 p.m.
Board of Directors
LWVBN Office and Zoom

Monday, January 27, 2:00 p.m.
Healthcare Committee
Contact Alberta Roman for location

Monday, February 10, 12:30 p.m.
Community Partnerships
via Zoom

Monday, February 10, 2:30 p.m.
Speakers Bureau
LWVBN Office

Monday, February 10, 4:00 p.m.
Board of Directors
LWVBN Office and Zoom

Saturday, February 22, 10:30 a.m.
LWV Membership Meeting
LWVBN office, 1272 Delaware Ave.

Monday, February 24, 2:00 p.m.
Healthcare Committee
Contact Alberta Roman for location.

The Voter is now being published six times a year. The next edition will arrive in the beginning of March.