

MARCH, 2025

<https://lwwrocklandcounty.org/>

# LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF ROCKLAND COUNTY

## WINTER/SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER



### President's Message

Welcome to 2025! I'm delighted to announce that RCLWV begins this year with a total of 71 members! For those of you who may not remember, we had 17 members in June of 2023.

I'd like to thank each and every one of you for supporting our League and helping to carry out our mission to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy.

In addition to our robust Voter Services efforts, in 2025 we'll focus on Defending Democracy. With LWWUS, LWWNY and RCLWV working together there are exciting opportunities for everyone to become involved.

Locally we're organizing an Observer Corps. Monica Ferguson is spearheading that project. I'm sure you'll hear from her soon if you haven't already. For information on what an Observer Corps is and why it's important, see the article on page TBD.

We also plan to offer Civics education to all voters, not just students. I'd appreciate any ideas you may have to develop that program.

Advocacy is an essential piece of our mission. We hope to increase our efforts in that area.

At the State level we submitted our Legislative Agenda priorities and our support for Ranked Choice Voting and Open Primaries. Thanks to all of you who participated in that meeting. For more details, see the article on page TBD.

At the Federal Level we will be participating in the Federal Judiciary Study that was initiated at the Annual Meeting in June. We'll be meeting to discuss the study and to come to consensus on the proposed positions.

PLEASE watch for the emails about the meeting/meetings and PLEASE participate. It's a chance to make our voices heard.

Please remember that Democracy is not a spectator sport and that it starts locally. We can make a difference if everyone volunteers a few hours in the activities that they are passionate about. I promise there's something for Everyone. Here's to a productive 2025!

Warm regards,  
Gayle Struble, Co-President

# Linda Sue Berns

## IN MEMORIAM



Linda Sue Berns, 88, a beloved icon of Suffern, NY, passed away on February 22, 2025, after a life devoted to helping others. Her service and dedication to social justice, civil rights, and feminist issues made her a beacon of light in her community. The world is a bit darker with her passing.

Linda was a member of the Board of the Rockland County League of Women Voters for over 50 years and served as immediate past president for 8 years. Linda was a dedicated public servant who held leadership positions in many civic and municipal organizations, greatly impacting the greater Rockland community in a myriad of ways. Her dedication to voting rights, fair housing, human rights, and the problem of domestic violence were the hallmarks of her service.

Linda was determined not to allow her illness to prevent her from completing the work she wanted to do, and she didn't. Linda Berns made a difference in ways that are well known and no doubt, in some ways which have yet to be discovered. She will be dearly and deeply missed.

Special Note with love from Sandy Bromberg, longtime friend of Linda and RCLWV leader

*"A dear friend and remarkable person has died. She gave so much to our community. I knew her best at first as president of the Rockland County League of Women Voters. I became one of her two vice presidents. She amazed me with her knowledge of political issues and what the League was about. I stayed with it because I wanted to learn from her. I did and am inspired to know more. She always had a way of making you laugh and when you called her, she recited a poem and encouraged you to create one."*

*Linda was strong and candidly realistic. I didn't want to believe she would die. She said this will happen before my birthday so she couldn't reciprocate, when I treated her to lunch for hers. I was hoping something would happen; a new research would find a way to help her live. My sympathy to her family and everyone who was touched by her wonderful, giving life."*

## RCLWV Board of Directors 2024-2025

Please join us in welcoming, supporting, and thanking our 2024-2025 RCLWV Board of Directors!

### Leadership Team 2023-2025

Gayle Struble

Doria E. Hillsman

### Treasurer

Gail Wanger

### Continuing Directors 2024-25 (Currently with 1-year term left)

Barbara Pease

Gina Ironside

Sandy Bromberg

### Directors (2-year term) 2024-2026

Holly Furman

Paul Adler

Beth Davidson

Theresa DiFalco

### Student Representative (2-year term) 2024-2026

Ashley Ely

## Committees

Be on the lookout for information on our committees and how you can get involved!

[Read More on our website](#)



## Contact Your Leadership Team

Doria E. Hillsman, Co-President:  
[doria.hillsman@gmail.com](mailto:doria.hillsman@gmail.com)

Gayle Struble, Co-President:  
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Gail Wanger, Treasurer:  
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Monica Ferguson, Social Media:  
[themonicaferguson@gmail.com](mailto:themonicaferguson@gmail.com)

## Calendar of Events

### **March**

**March 29:** New Membership Meeting, Saturday, 10:00 AM at the New City Public Library

**March 30:** Rockland County Youthfest, SUNY Rockland Community College Fieldhouse; 11am – 3pm

### **April**

**April 4:** Naturalization Ceremony

### **May**

**May 6:** LWV New York State Lobby Day. Speak with local and state representatives on topics and issues that impact us the most. Details to follow.

### **June**

**June 6:** Naturalization Ceremony

**June 7:** Annual Membership Meeting. Save the date! Details to follow.

**June 20-22:** LWWNYS Convention

## More Ways To Reach Us

To Join: <https://lwwrocklandcounty.org/join-our-league/>

To Donate: <https://lwwrocklandcounty.org/donate-to-the-league/>

Email: [rocklandlww@gmail.com](mailto:rocklandlww@gmail.com)

Website: <https://lwwrocklandcounty.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVRockland>



### State/National Activities

As an organization dedicated to empowering voters and defending democracy, the League of Women Voters reports that we will continue our work to protect and expand voting rights and challenge those who seek to undermine democratic principles and processes.

**"Women Defend Democracy"** is the new programmatic focus for the League in 2025, centering people power and moving our country towards a stronger, multi-racial democracy.

Through the "Women Defend Democracy" campaign, the League will work to:

- Provide Democracy Education & Election Administration Support
- Restore and Defend Voting Rights Protections
- Abolish the Electoral College
- Protect Democracy Organizations & Institutions
- Fight for Reproductive Freedoms

This campaign kicks off for the first 100 days of the new administration and beyond. The League of Women Voters is well positioned to defend attacks on democracy in the coming months and years. Together, we believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. Be a part of the campaign by joining our mailing list <https://www.lwv.org/take-action/women-defend-democracy>.

**Stand Up to Xenophobia with LWVUS:** Tell your members of Congress to oppose the SAVE Act. The House and Senate introduced the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, which would require citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering. Learn more about the SAVE Act and how you can get involved [here](#).

### **Eight Reasons to Get Involved**

Do you have friends or family members who would benefit by joining us? Why not share these eight great reasons from the LWVNY why they should join:



1. Civic Engagement
2. Advocacy for Voter Rights
3. Education and Information
4. Community Involvement
5. Advocacy for Specific Policies
6. Empowerment of Women
7. Grassroots Activism
8. Networking and Skill Development

Visit [Get Involved | League of Women Voters New York](#), for more information.

## **RCLWV Newsworthy**

### **Grants Received!**

Congratulations are in order! Our chapter is the recipient of two national LWV Grants for 2025: **Youth Voter Registration and New Citizen Registration**. Many thanks to Gayle Struble and Monica Ferguson for their commitment to ensuring that we submitted the applications, provided crucial and thoughtful strategic plans for the grants, and garnered support throughout the chapter. Be on the lookout for how we'll be spending that much-coveted funding to further our mission. We'll be reaching out for your assistance in implementing those plans.

### **Hot Topics Submitted**

On February 6th, members met to discuss and vote for the issues we'd like prioritized by the NY State chapter throughout 2025. The state identified ten topics and asked each chapter to provide their top three issues. Thanks to Doria E. Hillsman for providing a summary explanation of each of the state's choices prior to running a ranked choice vote.

The results are in! The three topics that the RCLWV will be sharing with LWVNY as our priorities are: **Election Law; Natural Resources; and State Finance and Education**. Our votes, along with the choices of the more than 40 other chapters in NY, will be delivered to the State. Thanks to all who participated! You'll be hearing more about the hot topics and initiatives throughout the year.

### **Support for Studies**

At the same February meeting, attendees learned about NY State's position on Ranked Choice Voting and Nonpartisan Primaries. If approved by members on LWVNY, the position statements will be used by the state Board to finalize new state League positions on the topics. Participants were asked to decide:

- Do we concur with the position statement supporting the use of Ranked Choice Voting?
- Do we concur with the position statement supporting the use of primary systems that open participation to more registered voters, up to and including nonpartisan primaries where all voters can vote for all candidates?



RCLWV voted by majority decision to concur with LWVNY's positions.

For more information on the studies and related activities, visit: [LWVNY Studies | League of Women Voters New York](#)

### Get Ready for ChapterSpot!

In early February, the League of Women Voters launched its new membership dues platform, called **CHAPTERSPOT**. ChapterSpot is a centralized membership portal that will make the dues process easier and more uniform throughout the country. Here's what that means for you and for our local chapter:

- **Individual leagues will now keep a much larger percentage (20%)** of the PMP (per member payments) than we ever have in the past.
- **Dues collection will be "rolling"**, that is, instead of having a renewal period, membership renewals will be based on individual anniversary dates. You will receive an email from the portal reminding you to renew.
- **'Pay what you can':** Any individual may join the League for one year by paying any amount equal to or greater than \$20. The suggested amount will be \$75.
- **Member Types:** **There is no longer a Household Membership** - Members join as individuals and must have their own unique email address, which will serve as their username. **There is no longer a Student Membership.**
- Persons who have been members for 50 years are **Life Members** and will continue to have their member dues waived.
- **Auto-Renew:** Members will be encouraged to register their financial information to sign up for automatic renewal.
- **You will receive an email in early February**, asking you to **"Claim Your Membership"**. You will be given a unique link to update your information and sign on to ChapterSpot.

### Observer Corps

We're happy to announce that our chapter will soon have its own Observer Corps. Modeled after the LWVNY's Corps, 2025 is the year we revitalize the program in Rockland County. Here's how it works: members attend meetings of local, regional, state, and national governmental bodies to listen, learn, and make factual reports of the proceedings. Observers do not speak for the LWV, but by attending and reporting on activities, we earn a reputation as a fair and accurate civic monitor. If you're interested in learning more, or becoming a member of the RCLWV Observer Corps, contact [Monica Ferguson](mailto:themonicaferguson@gmail.com) at [themonicaferguson@gmail.com](mailto:themonicaferguson@gmail.com).

## The League of Women Voters:

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. That's been our vision since 1920, when the League of Women Voters was founded by leaders of the women's suffrage movement. For 100 years, we have been a non-partisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in democracy. The League works to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. For more information, and membership information, visit: League of Women Voters of Rockland County:

<https://lwvrocklandcounty.org/>

League of Women Voters of NY: <https://www.lwvny.org/>

League of Women Voters (National): <https://www.lwv.org/>