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**NH Voter**, the newsletter of the League of Women Voters NH      **February 2025**

**Join us in celebrating the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters.**

On Feb. 14, 1920, the National American Woman Suffrage Association members met in convention and voted to change their name to the League of Women Voters. With the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment making its way around the states, the suffragists realized that only part of their work was done. Next they needed to help newly enfranchised women learn the mechanics of voting: how to register, how to get and mark a ballot, etc. But also how to study issues so they could vote from a position of knowledge. Thus the League of Women Voters was born, as a non-partisan organization for women to do just that!

Today we proudly continue that non-partisan status, now welcoming members of all gender identities, and continuing to study issues so that we can take public positions on them.

The **newest study** is a fast-paced study of the **federal judiciary system**. How timely, as 43 suits have been filed in courts to rule on federal executive orders and what may be federal overreach, in only the first 26 days of the new administration. See the section later in this newsletter with links you can use to review the study materials and prepare for the consensus meetings, which will be held both in person and virtually here in NH, just as leagues in other states will do. The goal is to have a position ready for national League council to review in June. Then we'll be able to advocate from that position of knowledge, which has been at the foundation of League work.

In an organization as old as ours, of course there have been **changes over the years**. Local League meetings are no longer held in members' homes, with tea and cookies a welcome diversion from the serious discussion of local issues. Much of our work is done online, and

most of it relates to state issues. That's why we send the weekly legislative alerts with requests for members and others to sign on in support of League positions regarding bills in the Legislature. We ask you to contact your own state reps and senators when bills come up for a vote.

Another change is related to how we function. In **New Hampshire** about 10 years ago we changed the way finances were handled for local Leagues and reduced the administrative burden on local League steering committees. No longer were local or regional units to be burdened with sending out dues notices, filing tax reports, maintaining their membership status on the national database, and other paperwork and reporting. With the exception of the LWV of the Kearsarge/Sunapee area, which has been managing its own dues and finances for over 50 years, the other units are officially Member At Large units of the state League. The state League has taken care of their expenses and collected their dues and forwarded the per member payment to the national League as required. People joined or renewed their membership at the state level, and the state board kept the local units informed of membership changes.

But now, a **new membership process has been put in place** as the result of decisions made several years at the national League convention.

**Joining or renewing membership will be done online**, with members able to update their address or email themselves. A membership portal has been created by the national League.

**Dues paid will be divided among the national and state League, with LWV NH still covering the expenses of our local/ regional unit's activities.** (The exception remains of members in the Kearsarge/Sunapee Area league, whose dues when joining or renewing are divided three ways).

**What will happen going forward:** When a member's renewal date is within the next 45 days, the member will get an email from the national League, with a unique link to set up their individual profile and to pay dues via credit or bank card. *Please don't sent checks to the state League office unless absolutely necessary; it creates work for us to forward payments to LWV-US for division among the national League and state/local Leagues.*

Until this year, each state League was able to set the dues rate. No matter what our rate, local and state Leagues had to send \$32 per member to the national League to support their work, or \$16 per additional member in the same household. Our dues in NH have been \$45 per member, or \$55 for two in the same household for a number of years. That didn't leave us much income to cover our expenses, so we thank the many people who willingly paid more than their required dues. Almost all states charged significantly more in dues than NH did.

**The new dues rate will be the same across the country, but while it has a “suggested” rate of \$75 annually per person, it is on a “pay as you can” sliding scale, with a minimum of \$20 per person to be a member.**

We hope that members understand this was a national convention decision. It cuts down on the paperwork burden of the state Leagues. None of us joined League for the “fun” of stuffing envelopes with dues notices or trotting to the bank weekly with checks received and manually updating the roster. We made it work, but your state board is looking forward to being relieved of those chores, to focus on advocacy and outreach.

*What we don't want to happen is that members will view the suggested dues as too high.*

*Please, if you can pay \$75 or more per year to keep our organization on all levels healthy and active, do so, And if you can't, please renew at the amount that is comfortable to you. Your membership, including your participation in our local and state activities and our legislative action, is valuable to League. You matter!*

No need to do anything now; LWV US staff are trying to work out some glitches right now.

Look for an email from LWV US when your membership is up for renewal. We'll try to answer questions when you have them.

**LWV study of the federal judiciary:** Long-time League members, you know how this works.

Please participate and help those who are newer to League as we go thru the study/consensus process together.

--Members read and think about the facts and opinions, then meet to discuss a set of questions.

--Only those questions on which the group reaches consensus become part of the report we submit.

--Our answers in the aggregate across the country will be the basis of the position

approved by the national board. --Then and only then can we take formal action in the name of the League of Women Voters on matters/legislation concerning the federal judiciary.

Here is a link to the study articles to get you started: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/advocacy-litigation/2024-2025-federal-judiciary-study-process-committee-and>

What matters right now is the section on **“Policy Briefs.”** Don’t worry about the consensus questions; they will be used at meetings, which haven’t yet been scheduled.

Local/regional League leaders who will be called on to lead the consensus meetings should read through the section called “Study Guide” (PDF)

Learn about the **NH State Budget** from the experts: The NH Fiscal Policy Institute is holding a webinar. Sign up at this link: <https://nhfpi.org/events/examining-the-state-budget-2025-webinar-series/>

**Join the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute on Friday, February 21, at 10:30 AM for a free, live webinar where our experts will analyze the Governor’s budget proposal,** providing insights into key themes, historical context, and the economic and revenue trends shaping the next State Budget.

This webinar is part of NHFPI’s State Budget Webinar Series, a three-part program examining the Governor’s proposal (February 21), the House Finance Committee’s version (April 7), and the Senate Finance Committee’s version (June 3).

One more item: one of our partner organizations in NH is taking the lead on **high school voter registration drives**, with staff and a successful model to follow. If getting young people registered, attend one of the Open Democracy webinars on the topic, then reach out to your young contacts and encourage them to organize a drive in their own schools. This is not something League can do for them. The impetus must come from students, but the webinars will teach you (and them) how to plan a project.

Two webinars are scheduled, March 6 and 23. Sign up on Open Democracy’s events page: <https://www.opendemocracynh.org/calendar>