



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
THE SYRACUSE METROPOLITAN

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We, the members of the Leadership Team of the League of Women Voters of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area, wish to present the following testimony to the New York State Senate Committee on Elections Hearing scheduled for Syracuse NY on August 4, 2021.

The League believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed; therefore, its basic mandate is to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise.

Over the past few years, the New York State Legislature, with the Governor's approval, has passed several election reforms to make voting easier for our citizens including early voting, absentee ballot reforms during the time of Covid and an automatic voter registration bill that includes agencies outside of the Department of Motor Vehicle that will take effect in 2023. This November voters will have the opportunity to pass two changes to the State Constitution – to allow for no-excuse absentee voting and to remove the mandated 10-day voter registration deadline. The League supports these amendments and urges voters to vote "yes" for these amendments.

There is much more to be done to improve the process including:

1. Ensuring that absentee ballots are not thrown out when there are stray marks or writing on the ballot and the express intent of the voter is unambiguous.
2. Directing the Board of Elections to provide an online tool so voters can clearly and transparently track their own absentee ballot every step of the of the process from the moment the original request is received, approved, mailed, and delivered to the voter, the completed ballot has been received back, the voter has had the opportunity to correct it and the actual counting of the ballot has been completed.
3. Reviewing, curing, sorting, and canvassing absentee ballots sooner to reduce post- election tactics.
4. Avoiding disqualifying a registered voter's entire ballot solely because it was cast at a poll site in their county that is different from the voter's assigned polling place.
5. Ensuring that there is adequate funding for carrying out the duties of the Board of Election as well as adequate funding for training election commissioners their staffs and all poll workers.
6. Support from the legislature and the governor for the John R Lewis Voting Rights Act of NYS an amendment to the NYS Constitution that would help prevent and redress acts of voter suppression, disenfranchisement, or intimidation and require certain localities to clear local changes to voter access that could infringe civil rights for many New York citizens.

Although many areas of New York State experienced major problems during the 2020 election, Onondaga County witnessed few problems. We commend the Onondaga County Board of Elections for their diligence in carrying out the election.

League of Women Voters of the Syracuse Metropolitan Area Leadership Team,

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