

Regina Tillman, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access

The time for preparing the electorate for voting is upon us! But I hope that perhaps this past summer, upon reflection, will present many of us with pleasant memories, having had time spent with family and friends, and some new acquaintances.

Unfortunately, I also hold in my mind's eye the news of folks kidnapped from jobs while having awaited the citizenship process for the past 7 years... women with Green Cards, who had passed the citizenship test and only needed the ceremony, being whisked away from their families... Black and Brown men increasingly stopped in their cars for no apparent reason and being harassed by some of our "safety officers"... then, if placed in the local jails, having to deal with being beaten by some of the guards, again for no apparent reason... that school season began with more mass shootings.... that the SAVE Act threatens the ability of many women to cast their votes, and yes, some legislators think that this was a good idea.

To say that this, and more, is very distasteful is not enough. People are being targeted for the traits they were born with and have no choice in the matter... beginning with their skin color. To say that we all need to react and reengage is an understatement.

If you have been wondering what to do in this new membership year, consider the work of broadening the scope and application of the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access. Looking through a "DEI Lens", apply it within your League to your policies, procedures and practices, your deployment of resources (making sure they are where most needed), and to your communities in a non-transactional manner. Consider helping to make it understood throughout NYS that, per LWVUS, *DEI is not just a buzzword, but rather a set of core values that we need to retain in order to defend and uphold our representative democracy.*

The work of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access crosses all segments of effort by the League, primarily among them education, advocacy, voting rights, membership and leadership. Thus, we ask that each local League appoint someone to aid in directing the efforts of DEI locally, and as well, to serve as the bridge between the efforts of the State DEI Committee and your own local League work. If names are changing, local

leadership is asked to email the replacement names. If filling a vacant position, forward that name as well. *Members, if interested, please let your local President know that you are willing to take on this task on behalf of your local League and send in your name, location and contact info.*

The next DEI Committee meeting is scheduled for October 6th. Plus, we are finally looking forward to creating the DEI section of the State website and plan to post therein the names (and headshots, if available) of the local DEI points of contact throughout the State by November 2025. In other words, it would be wonderful to have all of the persons doing this work, in collaboration with the State LWV as active members of the LWVNYS DEI Committee, shared as soon as possible so that we can proceed in full force into this pivotal year! And as active members, there is the added benefit of cross-fertilization of ideas across local Leagues! Have questions? Submissions can be submitted to this writer at rmt370@gmail.com .