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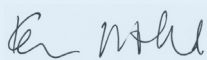
# INSIDE THE LEAGUE

## From the Co-Presidents

As the League prepares for the June local primary elections, we cannot ignore the current attacks on our voting rights, civil rights, and democracy coming from the new administration in Washington. We are proud to represent New York City as part of an organization with strong State and National partners who are standing up and speaking out against these aggressions. Together we are defending our rights through the courts, legislation, advocacy, community and coalition partnerships, civic engagement, public rallies, letter writing, and phone calls.

As we ensure our rights and democracy are protected, we cannot lose sight of the importance of the upcoming local elections. NYC voters will be selecting their next Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, 5 Borough Presidents, all 51 City Council Members, and 2 District Attorneys (Manhattan and Brooklyn). The League remains committed to increasing civic participation and voter turnout in New York City and is expanding our outreach to ensure that New York City voters understand Ranked Choice Voting, which will be used in primaries for all offices (except DA).

We are fighting for all New Yorkers and are mobilizing our committed members, volunteers, and supporters to raise their voices. Let's commit to defending our democracy and strengthening civic engagement at all levels of government. We hope to see you in the community and especially at the polls.



**Kai Rosenthal**  
president@lwvnyc.org



**Deborah Brodheim**  
co-president@lwvnyc.org

## League and the Pandemic—Carrying On

By Suzanne Surbeck, LWVNYC Member

Five years ago, and yet it seems like only yesterday that the world was on hold as the pandemic swept through NYC. But while LWVNYC took the precaution of closing our office, we were open for business, necessary since 2020 was an important presidential election year.

League members experienced the pandemic in different ways, both with the League, at home, and at vacation homes. The resilience of both the members and staff was apparent as they worked hard to keep the League and their families safe.

One location was Governors Island where, for several weekends, dedicated volunteers registered voters and gave out brochures with information for the vote. Their presence reminded visitors of the importance of voting even in such challenging times. One volunteer, Elana Foundos, was making a return trip home to Governors Island where she had grown up as a child. She was even known as the "General's Babysitter."



LWVNYC members registering voters on Governor's Island  
(photo by Elana Foundos)

Even in such difficult times, the League's work was never done. It proved once again that where there's a will there's a way—and the League will find it.

# LWVNYC Annual Fundraising Luncheon

By Stacey Lesser, LWVNYC Member

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, the League of Women Voters of the City of New York presented the 2025 Tribute Awards. The sold-out event was held at Baruch College Conference Center and attended by 186 people. Attendees included League Members, Advisory Board Members, friends, family, and our corporate sponsors: MZ Wallace, Citizen Travelers, WABC-7, Con Edison, EY, Amalgamated Bank, Bloomberg Philanthropies, LiveOnNY, Pure Insurance, and Partnership for New York City.

The program, which was emceed by Shirleen Allicot of WABC, honored Shaina Taub, *Suffs* Creator and Tony Award winner. Ms. Taub was an especially apt honoree as her musical told the story of the founding of the League of Women Voters and brought it to a Broadway audience. In fact, the event's "Marching On" theme was chosen as a reminder that the progress the League and others have made in voting rights and access continues today, to ensure all voices are heard in our democracy. Ms. Taub was interviewed by fellow playwright and performer Heidi Schreck (*What the Constitution Means to Me*), and they discussed using creative platforms as a means

of sharing their points of view on critical issues in society.

In addition to honoring Ms. Taub, the League recognized three organizations for their outstanding civic engagement work in New York City:

**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority** (Bronx and Brooklyn Alumnae Chapters). In keeping with the

theme of Ms. Taub's play, the Delta's first act of public service was participating in the Suffrage March of 1913.

**Amalgamated Bank** for a 100-year commitment to using its power of banking to create positive social change.

**Citizen Travelers** launched in 2021 on the belief that strong civic engagement is essential to a durable and stable democracy.

As the League's major fundraising event for the year, the 2025 Tribute Awards was a great success! Check out the [event ejournal](#), view [more pics from the event](#), or view/download [Red Carpet photos](#).

## 2025 Tribute Awards MARCHING ON



# What is Ranked Choice Voting?

In 2019, voters in New York City came together to pass a new way to vote called Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). RCV allows voters to **rank up to five candidates**, instead of choosing only one candidate.

## WHEN DO WE USE RANKED CHOICE VOTING?

New York City uses ranked choice voting for Primary and Special Elections for the offices of Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, and City Council Members. It is not used for District Attorneys – though responsible for each borough, they are State officials.

You can only vote in a Primary Election if you are registered with a political party that is holding a primary to choose their candidate for the General Election ballot. NYC Special Elections are held if an elected official leaves office before the end of their term, and are open to any registered voter regardless of party.

## WHY DO WE USE RANKED CHOICE VOTING?

- It encourages more candidates to connect with more voters
- It saves public money (your money!) by not having a runoff election if no candidate wins more than 50% of all votes
- It gives voters more say because they have multiple choices

## HOW DO YOU FILL OUT YOUR BALLOT?

Ballots can have more than five candidates, but you can rank only up to five.

- Choose your first-choice candidate by filling in the oval next to their name in the 1<sup>st</sup> column
- If you have a second choice, fill in the oval next to their name in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column

- You may choose (or rank) *up to* five candidates in order of your preference
- You don't have to choose five candidates if you only prefer one or two
- Only choose one candidate for each level of preference or your ballot won't count
- Do not select the same candidate more than one time or your ballot won't count

	1	2	3	4	5
CANDIDATE A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE B	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE C	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
CANDIDATE E	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## HOW DOES RANKED CHOICE VOTING WORK?

If a candidate receives more than 50% of first choice votes, that candidate wins the election. If no candidate receives more than 50%, the ranked choice redistribution begins:

- The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated
- If your first-choice candidate was eliminated, your vote gets redistributed to your 2<sup>nd</sup> choice candidate
- This process continues until a candidate receives more than 50% of all votes

**Download the League's new What is Ranked Choice Voting? guide**

# LWVNYC Intern Program

By Diane Burrows, LWVNYC Board Director and Committee Chair

This semester we welcomed seven high school and college students into our internship program. These students have found time between their studies, extracurricular activities, and jobs to work as volunteers with the League. They participated in our "Marching On" event on March 25 and have also been

conducting research for candidate forums and participating in lobbying events. Our recruitment of interns for this summer has already produced fifteen students who are excited to volunteer with us. All students are encouraged to reach out to their schools to obtain stipends, course credits, or grants for their time with us.



# Making Voter Resources More Accessible for New Yorkers During the Local Election Cycle

This year politics are local. New York City has a June primary that will use Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) to elect a Mayor, a Public Advocate, a Comptroller, 51 City Council Members, and 5 Borough Presidents. This is only the 3<sup>rd</sup> time RCV has been used in New York City. The process is not yet well understood, and it looks like there will be a lot of candidates to consider.

So, an important and complicated election. At the League this means doing everything we can to ensure that voters have access to the resources they need to feel confident in their votes and make informed decisions. To this end our volunteers are focused on expanding our voter resources. We received a significant grant from Con Edison to make our seminal book, *What Makes New York City Run?* more accessible.

Beyond this, we are exploring all means available to make materials that voters can read and understand.

For example, almost half the households in New York City speak a language other than English at home. Almost 2 million of those people are early English learners. So, one important way to increase accessibility is to translate our resources into other languages. We've chosen Spanish and Simplified Chinese for this pilot program, based on the volume of New Yorkers who speak or read these languages.

BronxNet, the public access media company in the Bronx, extended a very generous in-kind offer to edit our existing five 60-second video explainers on the responsibilities of public officials. They translated our videos into Spanish and Simplified

Chinese and provided voice overs and subtitles in those languages for all five of our videos.

Another way to make resources more accessible is to make the information easier to take in. We do this by transforming the content into graphic “explainers” that convey the key concepts about how the city works. We will create a total of five guides using graphic explainers. We are working with the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), a firm that specializes in communicating with lay people about policy, processes, and systems. CUP has experience with design and also with translation.

The final challenge is how to proofread an explainer in another language if you don't know the language. The solution? Find organizations that can help proofread or watch the translated pieces for both grammar and cultural relevance. And this brings us to the final element that gives this project wings: the community-based organizations that have partnered with us, first to help to proofread drafts and view the video explainers and second, to allow the League to use these new voter resources in their communities. We are working with **Dominicanos USA** on the Spanish version and with the **Chinese-American Planning Council** on the Simplified Chinese version.

Ultimately, there will be a total of five guides. The first two went to press on April 9.

- 1) Ranked Choice Voting
- 2) Who Makes NYC Run?
- 3) Budget Process
- 4) Land Use Process
- 5) Participatory Government/How to Participate

### What is Ranked Choice Voting?

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#### When do we use RCV?

NYC Primary Elections are held to vote for Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, City Council Members and Borough Presidents. You can only vote in a Primary Election if you are registered with a political party holding a primary to choose their candidate for the General Election ballot.

NYC Special Elections are held if an elected official leaves office before the end of their term, and are open to any registered voter regardless of party.

It is not used for District Attorneys. Though responsible for each borough, they are State officials.

#### Why do we use RCV?

- It encourages candidates to connect with more voters who might rank them in their top five.
- It saves public money (your money!) by not having a runoff election if no candidate wins more than 50% of all votes.
- It gives voters more say because they have multiple choices.

#### How do you fill out your ballot?

Ballots can have more than five candidates but you can rank only up to five.

##### CORRECT BALLOT

You can vote for only one candidate OR you can rank up to five.

	1	2	3	4	5
Mayor	Apple				
	Banana				
	Pear				
	Grape				
	Orange				

##### INCORRECT BALLOT

Your ballot won't count if you:

	1	2	3
Mayor	Apple	Apple	
	Banana		
	Pear		
	Grape		
	Orange		

Don't rank a candidate twice.

	1	2	3
Mayor	Apple	Banana	
	Banana		
	Pear		
	Grape		
	Orange		

Don't give the same ranking to multiple candidates.

### Who Makes NYC Run?

Elected officials have a lot of power over what happens in New York. By voting, you get to choose who gets elected!

During a campaign, a candidate might say they'll increase affordable housing, or fix the MTA, but does the position they're running for have the ability to deliver on that promise?

Check out the elected officials on the back to see who oversees what in NYC.

You elect all these people!

The Mayor

The Comptroller

Borough Presidents

51 City Council Members

The Public Advocate

District Attorneys

Except for the District Attorneys (DAAs), each of these roles serves a 4-year term and can serve a max of 2 terms (8 years). DAAs don't have term limits. They can run for re-election as long as they choose.

LEAGUE FOR NEW YORK VOTERS  
CIVIC EDUCATION FUND  
VOTE LOUSIER

Here's a sneak peek at the first two guides on *Ranked Choice Voting* and *Who Makes NYC Run?*

All of these resources are or will be available on our website [HERE](#).

# Hands Off Our Democracy: LWVNYC

By Jessica Turberville, LWVNYC Intern

On April 5th, LWVNYC joined thousands of other New Yorkers in the nationwide “Hands Off!” march, urging the current presidential administration to halt government downsizing, economic inequality, and interference with human rights. As an intern with the League of Women Voters, I had the opportunity to join in creating signs before the rally as well as march with fellow members.

My name is Jessica Turberville, and I’m a student at Marymount Manhattan College, with a major in Scenic Design and a minor in Politics and Human Rights. I feel strongly disturbed and disheartened about the recent violations to the constitutional rights of Americans by the executive orders of our current presidential administration. I had participated in the “Stop the Cuts” march a couple weeks prior, and had already planned to participate in the “Hands Off!” march, but found even more pride in participating with LWV. We marched from Bryant Park down to Madison Square Park from 1:30 pm to about 4 pm, alongside children, parents, veterans, doctors, politicians, college students (like myself), and people from all walks of life. People carried signs with variations of Hands Off (Hands Off Education, Hands Off Medicaid, Hands Off LGBTQ+ to name a few), some sharing personal testimonies of how recent presidential actions have affected them.

Seeing the sheer amount of people who showed up for the march gave me so much hope for the future of our country.



Jessica Turberville at Hands Off! protest in NYC

Standing in solidarity among them was empowering. I, as I’m sure many of you, have been very anxious about what the future holds for our democracy. But on Saturday, I was reminded that Americans do not back down without a fight. I am determined to continue advocating for myself and others through my work with LWVNYC. I have made efforts to contact my representatives, and urge you to do the same. The League uses advocacy, education, litigation, and organizing to achieve our mission to empower voters and defend democracy. I will continue to do so along with the League and will not back down when faced with attempts at oppression.





# See the Charter Commissions at Work

By Susie Gomes, LWWNYC City Affairs Committee Chair

In December 2024, Mayor Eric Adams established the New York City Charter Revision Commission. The Commission is tasked with reviewing the New York City Charter and determining how to make New York City’s municipal government more transparent and responsive to the needs of city residents. That same month, the City Council created their own commission called NYC Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy.

Each mayor of New York City has the authority to set up a Charter Commission to review the current Charter that acts as the City’s constitution. The City Council can also review the City Charter by setting up a similar commission, and they recently issued their commission’s Preliminary Staff Report. Both commissions are holding public hearings in each borough where the public can testify in person or submit written testimony. These hearings will also be available on Zoom if you can’t attend in person.

## NYC Charter Revision Commission public hearings:

### Brooklyn Public Input Session

Monday, May 19, 2025, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

### Queens Public Input Session

Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

### Bronx Public Input Session

Tuesday, June 10, 2025, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

### Staten Island Public Input Session

Monday, June 23, 2025, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

### Manhattan Public Input Session

Monday, July 7, 2025, 5:00pm – 8:00pm

Any member of the public may testify about their ideas for improving the City Charter for up to three (3) minutes. The CRC will hear testimony from people who attend the meeting in person and from people who attend by Zoom. The public may **submit written testimony** instead of or in addition to testifying live at a hearing.

## NYC Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy public hearings:

### Queens Public Hearing on Budget Transparency

Tuesday, April 29th – 5PM to 7PM

### Brooklyn Public Hearing on Government Accountability

Tuesday, May 6th – 5PM to 7PM

### Bronx Public Hearing on Land Use

Monday, May 12th – 5PM to 7PM

### Staten Island Public Hearing on Budget Transparency

Wednesday, May 14th – 5PM to 7PM

### Manhattan Public Hearing on Government Accountability

Monday, May 19th – 5PM to 7PM

These meetings are open to the public. In order to testify in person or via Zoom you must register, preferably in advance, but registration will be accepted up to and during the first 30 minutes of the hearing. Each member of the public will be given three (3) minutes to testify. If you are unable to testify due to time constraints, written testimony will continue to be accepted for the public record up to 72 hours after the meeting ends. If you would like to submit written testimony, you can send it to [info@thecommission.nyc](mailto:info@thecommission.nyc).

Come see what your fellow New Yorkers are saying and what they are concerned about. Speak your mind as well. Be involved!

## Join Our Search for a New Office

The League is looking for a new office to call home. The current office is housed in a building that is up for sale. Join our search committee as we look for something comparable in size and rent, near a major transit hub and accessible.

If you know real estate or just enjoy the hunt, we’d love to have you join the search.

Contact Katie at [office@lwvnyc.org](mailto:office@lwvnyc.org).

# LWVNYC Committee Updates

Please feel free to email the Committees if you're interested in learning more and/or would like to get involved. Visit [lwnyc.org](http://lwnyc.org) for more information about our Committees.

## CITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

By Susie Gomes, Chair

[cityaffairs@lwnyc.org](mailto:cityaffairs@lwnyc.org)

The City Affairs Committee quickly pivoted this quarter from the national elections to focus on the local New York City elections coming up this November 2025. As with all elections, there is much work to do, but in our local city elections, there is an added factor of helping our fellow citizens remember Ranked Choice Voting—what it is, how it is used, why it's helpful to the city, and importantly, how it makes their vote more powerful by keeping their vote in play longer.

Many of us have been working with others in the League to take excerpts from our book *What Makes New York City Run?* and create pamphlets for New Yorkers, first in English and now being translated into both Spanish and Simple Chinese. This will allow us to reach a large swath of New Yorkers missing from our outreach due to language barriers.

We are starting with two pamphlets: "Ranked Choice Voting" and "Who Makes New York City Run?" Later this year pamphlets in all three languages will be created for three more subjects: "Budget Process," "Land Use Process," and "How to Become Involved in NYC Government."

Regarding the upcoming local elections, do you know what's on the ballot? It includes the Mayor, the Comptroller, all 5 Borough Presidents, the Public Advocate and all 51 Council Member seats. That's A LOT of candidates to consider!

Are you familiar with the League's voter support website [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) – or just Vote411? Visit that website, and you can find voting information and everything you need to know about your own ballot just by inputting your address. It will show you who is on your ballot and, if you click on that candidate, you can find out more information about that candidate to help you compare/contrast the folks who are running.

BUT... here's the catch! Someone has to populate those fields!

**We are looking for volunteers to help create the questions, send out the forms, and populate the answers on all our NYC candidates before the June primaries. Want to be part of helping New Yorkers be smarter voters? Please contact Susie Gomes at [cityaffairs@lwnyc.org](mailto:cityaffairs@lwnyc.org)**

Oh, and in between all our other endeavors, we held a City Council Member Open House in February. It's always an amazing time to get to meet directly with our Council Members and hear from them what's going on in their districts.

## NYC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

By Sarah Erdos, Chair

[transportation@lwnyc.org](mailto:transportation@lwnyc.org)

The NYC Transportation Committee advocates for a transportation system that is sustainable, equitable, and accessible to all New Yorkers. We believe safe, reliable, and affordable mobility is fundamental to a thriving city.

In the year ahead, we aim to build stronger partnerships with local community organizations that share our values, and to create regular committee meetings that foster collaboration, discussion, and collective action. We're excited to grow our membership and identify new opportunities to push for meaningful, community-informed transportation improvements across the five boroughs.

## SPEAKERS BUREAU

By Diane Burrows, Chair

[speakers@lwnyc.org](mailto:speakers@lwnyc.org)

The Speakers Bureau is growing. We have welcomed many new volunteers who are willing and able to speak to community and school groups all over the city. We started the new election season with Civics Week in several high schools and colleges to share ways they can use their voices. We educated them on "Who Makes NYC Run" to prepare them to vote in the municipal primaries this spring, and we encouraged them to speak out through lobbying and advocacy during our "Three Pillars of Civic Engagement" presentations.

We will be traveling all over the city this spring sharing information about Ranked Choice Voting and distributing handouts in several languages. Already on the calendar are speaking events at churches, high schools, colleges, community groups, and civic fairs.

*(continued on next page)*

## LWVNYC Committee Updates

### VOTING REFORM COMMITTEE

By Bella Wang, Chair

[voting.reform@lwvnyc.org](mailto:voting.reform@lwvnyc.org)

As the Trump Administration has been relentlessly attacking constitutional rights, the City League has been joining forces with League chapters from across the country to meet the moment and act as a firm defender of democracy.

Spearheaded by the Voting Reform Committee, League members have begun meeting with NYC-based members of the US House of Representatives to reinforce the National League's

messaging: Congress must reclaim its Article I constitutional rights and stop executive overreach that is, among other things, threatening the right to vote for countless Americans.

League members are also meeting with members of the New York State Assembly and Senate to advocate for state-based protections against federal overreach, from protecting priorities in the state budget to shoring up voting rights. This is a critical time, and members of the City League have been active in response. To join the League in these advocacy efforts, please reach out to [voting.reform@lwvnyc.org](mailto:voting.reform@lwvnyc.org) to find out how you can participate.

## Save the Date

The League of Women Voters of the City of New York will hold its Annual Meeting in person at 6:00pm on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at the New York Society for Ethical Culture (2 W. 64th St.).

Please join us to hear from our Co-Presidents and to vote on Board Directors, the FY2026 Budget, any changes to our bylaws, and the Local Program for FY2026.

**More details to come.**

If you are a current member and haven't registered yet, please click [here](#) to register.





# Upcoming Events

Please contact [office@lwvnyc.org](mailto:office@lwvnyc.org) to confirm meeting dates!  
For more information on Meetings and Events, please visit [www.lwvnyc.org](http://www.lwvnyc.org)

## **ELECTIONS IN NYC THIS SPRING**

### **Brooklyn Special Election 22nd District**

Early Voting Period is May 10-18 / Election Day: May 20

### **NYC Primary Elections**

June 14-22: Early Voting / June 24: Primary Election Day

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

For information on our committees, visit  
<https://lwvnyc.org/our-impact/#issues-committees>

- City Affairs Committee: Contact [cityaffairs@lwvnyc.org](mailto:cityaffairs@lwvnyc.org)
- Committee for Criminal Justice Reform:  
Contact [lindsey.reynolds@live.law.cuny.edu](mailto:lindsey.reynolds@live.law.cuny.edu)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee: Contact [dei@lwvnyc.org](mailto:dei@lwvnyc.org)
- Education Committee: Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm.  
Contact [education@lwvnyc.org](mailto:education@lwvnyc.org) for more information
- Housing Committee: Contact [president@lwvnyc.org](mailto:president@lwvnyc.org)
- Program Committee: Meets on the 1st Monday of the month at either 10:30am or 6:00pm to accommodate preferences of committee members.  
Email [programs@lwvnyc.org](mailto:programs@lwvnyc.org) for more information
- Transportation Committee: Contact [transportation@lwvnyc.org](mailto:transportation@lwvnyc.org)
- Voter & Information Services Committee: Contact [voting.services@lwvnyc.org](mailto:voting.services@lwvnyc.org)
- Voting Reform Committee: Contact [voting.reform@lwvnyc.org](mailto:voting.reform@lwvnyc.org)

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newsletter contributors!*



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