



**Welcome back to the League of Women Voters of New Jersey's  
Advocacy Newsletter!**

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## **UPDATES FROM TRENTON**

### **Budget Advances, Without Transparency**

Late Wednesday night, [lawmakers in Trenton voted to advance a \\$54.3 billion budget](#) for the coming fiscal year. The late-night vote occurred even though the budget has not been publicly released and even legislators themselves were unable to review the budget prior to voting. In a further blow to transparency, no public testimony was allowed in the Budget committees prior to the vote.

The contents of the budget are just as concerning as the flawed process that produced it. Despite calls from the League and our fellow advocates in the For The Many coalition, the budget included a cut in the corporate business tax on large corporations, which will cost the state billions of dollars. At a time when state tax revenues are coming in below projections, those funds are needed to support important programs like pre-k, childcare, and New Jersey Transit.

However, there are some programs worth cheering in the budget. The budget [doubled the New Jersey Child Tax Credit](#), for a maximum benefit of \$1,000 per child. Increasing the Child Tax Credit has been a League priority, and we applaud the Legislature and the Governor for this important achievement.



### Trenton Takeover

The League joined the NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice and our partners to take over Trenton earlier this week. **Together we rallied for protections and access for all New Jerseyans.**

The League joined partners on a number of our priority issues including the New Jersey Voting Rights Act, Same-Day Voter Registration, Language Access, budget priorities, reproductive justice, and the Values Act.

The Values Act builds a more welcoming New Jersey by establishing critical protections that would allow immigrant community members to access the programs and services they need without fear of involvement from federal immigration authorities.



[Tell your legislators that you support the NJ Values Act here!](#)

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## Open Government Under Attack

Four new bills were recently introduced in the Assembly which would gut the Open Public Records Act, making it much more difficult for New Jerseyans to access information about their government.

The League is [leading advocacy efforts against these bills](#) and will continue to be a leader in protecting government transparency.



## ASSAULT ON TRANSPARENCY IN TRENTON: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

New Jersey lawmakers are advancing a package of bills that would drastically limit the public's ability to access public records related to government actions and contracts.

The bills:  
A5613, A5614, A5615, A5616

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## Elections Bills

On Monday, [the legislature passed elections reporting legislation](#) strongly supported by the League. This bill would bring clarity and consistency to election results reporting. This would help to combat misinformation and disinformation about elections.

In addition, the Assembly passed S.1888, the **New Voter Empowerment Act**. This bill, supported by the League, would allow 17-year old voters to vote in primary elections if they would turn 18 by the date of the general election. We will continue to advocate for this legislation and its passage in the Senate.

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## Reproductive Justice

### Update on Menstrual Equity Bill

The League continued to support A1349, the Menstrual Equity Bill, as it passed out of the Assembly Education and Assembly Appropriations in June.

### Update on A4829

The League also supported A4829, which would require the establishment of a new State website with information on rights related to, and health benefits coverage for, reproductive health care services, as it passed out of the Assembly Appropriations committee last week.

Stay tuned for additional updates as these bills advance through the legislature.

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## Letter Opposing Extra Time for NESE Pipeline

On May 19th, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey submitted written comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), in partnership with the League of Women Voters of New York and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, urging FERC not to grant extra time to Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Company on their proposed Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) pipeline.

[Read the full comments here.](#)

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## Contact Your Legislators

**Take action!** Send an email to your state legislators urging them to support the following bills:

- [Same-Day Voter Registration \(A1966/S247\)](#)
  - [NJ Voting Rights Act \(A4554/S2997\)](#)
  - [NJ Green Amendment \(ACR72/SCR15\)](#)
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## LEAGUE NEWS

### New Jersey Reparations Council

On Juneteenth, racial justice advocates and experts came together to announce the formation of the [New Jersey Reparations Council](#). The New Jersey Reparations Council is the first-of-its-kind commission to finally confront and repair New Jersey's deep and often overlooked involvement in slavery and its lasting impact on the contemporary life of Black people in our state.

**LWVNJ is proud to announce that our Executive Director, Jesse Burns, will serve on the Council as a member of the Democracy Committee.**

The Democracy Committee examines the history of voter suppression in New Jersey experienced by Black voters. The Committee also studies the obstacles Black communities still face in accessing the ballot, from long-standing structural barriers to disenfranchisement of people with criminal convictions. It studies barriers to representation inherent in New Jersey's form of government and explores how New Jersey can ensure the equitable electoral power of Black voters.

Learn more at [njreparationscouncil.org](https://njreparationscouncil.org).



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## LWVNJ Study on Reparations

At the 2023 Biennial State Convention, League of Women Voters of New Jersey members voted to conduct an organization study on reparations. League studies are member-driven processes that lead to official League positions on advocacy issues. League members interested in joining or learning more about the study committee can contact Elissa Kapp at [ekapp@lwvnj.org](mailto:ekapp@lwvnj.org).

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## Welcome LWVNJ's 2023 Summer Interns!

Alicia & Sebastian, students at Rutgers University, will spend this summer interning with the League doing nonpartisan voter outreach & working alongside our organizing team to build local community civic coalitions.



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## IN THE COURTS

**US Supreme Court Rejects "Independent State Legislature" Theory in Moore v. Harper Elections Case**

Democracy wins: Earlier this week, the US Supreme Court rejected a state legislature's exclusive and independent authority over federal elections and was resolute in not expanding that authority through the dangerous "Independent State Legislature" theory.

The case, [Moore v. Harper](#), involved the "independent state legislature theory" (ISLT), which suggested that state courts did not have the power to review actions of state legislatures relating to federal elections.



*Pictured: LWV NJ in DC rallying against the "Independent State Legislature" theory.*

"Every year, voters face attacks on their rights from state legislatures seeking more power for politicians over the will of the people," said **Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States**. "Today's decision is a major victory for our democracy because it rejects the dangerous idea that state legislatures have free rein to determine the rules for elections in their states. We applaud the Supreme Court's decision to reject the ISLT and affirm the voice of voters."



Today, League of Women Voters of the United States President Dr. Deborah Turner issued the following statement after the Supreme Court struck down race-conscious admissions policies at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina, severely limiting how institutions of higher education can consider race in admissions decisions.

"For far too long, Black students and other students of color have been excluded and underrepresented within our higher education system. Today's Supreme Court ruling reverses the decades-long precedent that upholds the constitutionality of higher education institutions considering the whole person, including race, in admission decisions. A student body that is reflective of our society — one that includes more representation of people of color within systems, structures, and institutions — benefits

all students and society as a whole. Today's devastating ruling will lead to less racially diverse student bodies, further disenfranchise people of color, and harm our democracy."

[Read more about this case on LWV's Legal Center.](#)

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## GET INVOLVED

### League Community Call

**On Tuesday, July 25th at 6pm, LWVNJ is hosting a League Community Call!** All League members are encouraged to join us.

During this call, staff will review what's included in the passed state budget and discuss our continued advocacy for ensuring our communities have the funding and resources needed to thrive. We will also discuss the League's fall advocacy priorities.

[REGISTER FOR COMMUNITY CALL](#)

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## Advocate Spotlight

### LWV Monmouth County Speaks Against Anti-trans School Policies

LWV Monmouth County took action against anti-trans school policies. At school board meetings in Middletown, Marlboro, Manalapan, and Colts Neck, League members voiced their concerns about policies that require parental notification regarding student's gender identification.

"Despite arguments otherwise, numerous studies and data show that forced outing to parents is harmful, not helpful to LGBTQ+ youth," said the League of Women Voters of Monmouth County. "It is important to note that this is not a stand-alone policy, but part of a concentrated effort to undermine public education. In addition to attacks on LGBTQ+ student rights, the campaign includes book bans, attacks on sexual education and attempts to rewrite American history by prohibiting accurate and necessary conversations about race and equity. The League of Women Voters cannot stand by while a small minority uses our classrooms as political battlegrounds at the expense of our students and our country's future."

[Read more at Patch.com.](#)

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## Help Us Continue to Advance this Work

Inspired? Overwhelmed? Maybe both? Your League is here for you. The League of Women Voters of NEW JERSEY! [But we need your donation, right here in the Garden State.](#)

We have a small staff - an amazing staff! But we're dependent on donations to keep our team employed and forging ahead - demonstrating that, in New Jersey, we really do empower voters and defend democracy.

**Please consider a donation to the League of Women Voters of NEW JERSEY!** Every dollar matters. Every voice matters. We're grateful for your generosity and galvanized by your support. Thank you, New Jersey!

DONATE \$20

DONATE \$50

DONATE \$100



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