

AAUW-NYS GOTV Counterpart Newsletter Get Out The Vote!



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Today is National Voter Registration Day!

Across the country, volunteers, celebrities, businesses, online activists, local officials, social service providers, and a whole host of others are joining hands in an unprecedented nationwide effort to help Americans get registered to vote. All in all, more than 1,000 partners are participating in what promises to be a day to remember.

Voter Registration for General Elections

- In Person: Friday, **OCTOBER 12, 2012**
- By Mail: Postmarked by Friday, OCTOBER 12, 2012; received by Wednesday, OCTOBER 17.

Absentee Ballot for General Election:

- To apply for ballot in person: Monday, November 5, 2012
- To apply for ballot by mail: postmarked by **Tuesday, October 30**
- To deliver ballot in person: Tuesday, November 6, 2012
- To deliver ballot by mail: Monday, November 5, 2012; received by Tuesday, November 13, 2012.
- Military ballots to be received by Monday, November 19, 2012.

Debate Central:

The dates of the **presidential debates are:**

- ♦ Wednesday, **October 3**, moderated by Jim Lehrer, Executive Editor of the PBS NewsHour
- ♦ Tuesday, **October 16**, moderated by Candy Crowley, Chief Political Correspondent, CNN, and Anchor, CNN's State of the Union
- ♦ Monday, **October 22** moderated by Bob Schieffer, Chief Washington Correspondent, CBS News, and Moderator, Face the Nation

The **vice presidential debate** is Thursday, **October 11**, and it will be moderated by Martha Raddatz, Senior Foreign Affairs Correspondent, ABC News (NOTE: This is the only vice presidential debate). All of the debates will begin at 9 p.m. ET and end at 10:30 p.m. ET.

The Challenge of Mandate Relief in New York State

The **LWV-NYS** is joining with the **Rockefeller Institute** to present a forum on “**The Challenge of Mandate Relief in New York State**” on **Oct. 2 in Albany**. Panelists on the forum will include **Lawrence Schwartz** (Sec to NYS Governor and Chief of Staff), NYS Senator **Betty Little**, **Stephen Acquario** (Executive Director of the NYS Assoc of Counties) and **Timothy Kremer** (Executive Director of NYS School Boards Assoc). Please RSVP to the Rockefeller Institute by September 26 (tel: 518-443-5258 or charbonm@rockinst.org) if you plan on attending as seats are limited. The Rockefeller Institute video-tapes their forums and they are posted on their website within a couple of days. When it is available, I will post the link.

Follow Congressional Bills

The U.S. Congress has to deal with thousands of bills each year. Though many aren't earth-shattering, the big headlines can ignore some very important legislation. That's why **Congress has revamped the search function on its site**. You can search bills by their official title and track them through each step of the process. Don't know the number of a bill? No problem. **The search site allows you to look for topics like "health care" or "immigration."** You can see every bill related to the issues that are important to you. The site is still in beta so there may be a few kinks. But, it's a great way to stay active and up to date with what our legislature is up to.

<http://beta.congress.gov/>

Voting:

Growth of early voting transforms electoral strategy

Election Day is more than six weeks away, but **by Nov. 6 tens of millions of Americans — perhaps as many as 40 percent of all voters — will have cast their ballots in the presidential race and other contests**. The robust growth in early voting, either by mailed absentee ballot or in person, has made it a critical element in the ground-game strategies of both major presidential campaigns. **The traditional get-out-the vote push, once focused on a the final hours of a contest, has become an elaborate 45-day operation**. Over the next month, the District and 34 states (including Maryland) will allow voters to cast early ballots without providing a reason — “no-excuse” voting. **Early votes are expected to make up the majority of ballots cast in battlegrounds such as Florida, North**

Carolina, Nevada and Colorado, where as many as 80 percent of all voters may be early. Two states, Oregon and Washington, conduct elections exclusively by mail, sending ballots to all registered voters about three weeks before the election. The volume of pre-Election Day activity is expected to surpass 2008, when about 33 percent of 131 million votes cast in the presidential contest were early. That is nearly double the 15 percent who voted early in 2000.

<http://tinyurl.com/bmtu76s>

You Got (Voter) ID?

With the election approaching, colleges in states with strict voter ID laws are doing what they can to get students the information they need. With the election barely a month away and voter registration deadlines quickly approaching, colleges and get-out-the-vote organizations are buckling down on their efforts – and in the states where contentious voter identification laws have made the process murky or uncertain, education becomes doubly important. Most colleges consider voter-related issues -- and civic engagement in general, be it community service or co-curricular programs -- to be part of their responsibility to students because it is, in a way, academic, said Nancy Thomas, director of studies of higher education and public life at CIRCLE at Tisch College at Tufts University. (Also, the Higher Education Reauthorization Act requires campuses to make an effort to enable students to vote.) Blocking of the student vote was one of the reasons U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) co-sponsored the **America Votes Act of 2012**, which he introduced Tuesday. The legislation would counteract the ID laws by allowing any voter without valid state identification to vote anyway, provided they sign an affidavit promising their identity on penalty of perjury. The system is modeled after Washington State's law, which is all vote-by-mail and requires no proof of identification. Larsen cited a report out of New York University's Brennan Center for Justice that found up to 18 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds do not have photo ID with their current address and name.

<http://tinyurl.com/dxlq5pb>

Activists use education to overcome new voting laws

Nineteen historically black colleges and universities have signed up for the HBCU Challenge, a national effort by historic black colleges and universities to register thousands of students across the country and educate them about new election laws in their states. "We're focusing on voter registration on college campuses to make sure that our students aren't disenfranchised," said Jessica Brown, national field coordinator for Black Youth Vote, a program run by the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. "There's a lot at stake, especially for our young people." Students at historically black colleges, black lawmakers and civil rights groups are battling new voter ID laws and other changes to state election laws by redoubling efforts to make sure voters know the rules in their states and have the right ID when they show up at the polls. Dozens of states have changed their election procedures. Some states require voters to show government-issued photo IDs. Others have reduced the time period when voters can cast ballots early and have imposed new limits on third-party groups that register new voters.

<http://tinyurl.com/cxupthk>

Voting laws may deter 10 million Hispanics, report says

Civil rights groups are warning that as many as 10 million Hispanics may be deterred from casting ballots because of changes to voting laws. In a report to be released Monday, the civil rights group Advancement Project cites the potential impact of newly restrictive photo identification laws, proof-of-citizenship requirements and late efforts in a few states to remove noncitizens from the voter rolls. Advocacy groups have been trying for several years to increase the number of Latinos who vote. In 2010, 6.3 million Latinos who were eligible to vote reported that they were unregistered and 10.8 million said they did not vote, according to census figures cited by the report.

<http://tinyurl.com/d9mrvgf>

Young People Hurt By Voter ID Laws, Too

And a new study seeks to get the message out that young people could indeed be very suppressed this election if these voter ID laws are allowed to stand. The study, titled “Turning Back the Clock on Voting Rights: The Impact of New Photo Identification Requirements on Young People of Color,” co-authored by University of Chicago political science professor Cathy Cohen, is an in-depth look at what codified disenfranchisement could mean for minority young people. The results, while not surprising, are saddening: Our estimates indicate that overall levels of turnout among young people of color are likely to be reduced by large numbers — between 538,000 and 696,000 in total — in the states that have passed these laws, perhaps falling below 2004 and 2008 levels. It’s important to develop a habit of voting at an early age. But when society puts laws in front of kids barring them from voting, what sort of message are we sending about their worth when it comes participating in democracy?

<http://tinyurl.com/bvh8oax>

Why We Should Care About the Homeless Vote

<http://www.alternet.org/activism/why-we-should-care-about-homeless-vote>

Late-Night Comedy Television Increases Political Discussion

The jokes, critiques and issues raised by late-night comedy television hosts may have a significant impact on how much people talk about the upcoming political election, based on a new study from the University of Michigan. The study, found that the political satire can be just as effective as regular political news in encouraging discussion among audience members. The research also discovered that while both late-night comedy television and hard news engaged audiences, late-night audiences were more likely to use online interaction as a way to comment on political issues.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/09/120918121320.htm>

Are you a teacher? Get Out The Vote!

To help make teaching about the upcoming U.S. elections easy for you and fun for your students, Mimio has created a guide with lesson plans, and downloadable interactive lessons for K-12 social studies classes. The lessons are aligned to standards and focused on essential social studies topics, including:

- ♦ Citizenship

- ♦ Rights and responsibilities
- ♦ Civic participation
- ♦ Characteristics of government
- ♦ Democracy

Fill out the short form to Download Your FREE Guide Today!

<http://info.mimio.com/edwk-updt-get-out-the-vote>

AAUW-NYS Branch GOTV Action!

Rockland County AAUW is sponsoring a **Candidate Forum** on Oct 21 with **JCC, AARP** and **LWV**.

Greater Rochester Area Branch (GRAB) and **Fairport Area Branch (FAB)** staffed a **voter registration table** at **Monroe Community College** at its "club sign up" day on Sept. 19.

Westchester Branch's Selena Barron handed out **100 voter registration applications** at the Sept. meeting to members. The branch is organizing registration efforts over the next few weeks at the Greenburgh Library and other libraries and at colleges in the area. The Current Issues Interest Group will continue their September discussion of "ISSUES RELATED TO THE NOVEMBER ELECTION in October.

In **St. Lawrence County**, AAUW and the League of Women Voters have been partnering to **register students on the four colleges campuses**: "**Campuses gear-up voter registration efforts ahead of general election.**"

<http://www.mpcourier.com/article/20120921/DCO01/709219934/-1/dco01>

Congressional Races to Watch

National groups eye Central New York voters, with Buerkle, Maffei deadlocked in race for Congress

<http://tinyurl.com/d7m3x2m>

Private Equity Firms Invested Most in New York's 14th Congressional District

<http://tinyurl.com/c7cungy>

College aid an issue in 19th race

<http://tinyurl.com/cx5sg44>

What's at Stake for Women (and their families) in 2012:

Where The Candidates Stand

Candidates: Where they stand on education

When voters go to the polls on Nov. 6, they'll choose from among presidential candidates who have very different views on the major issues affecting America, including education. With the election rapidly approaching, we've pulled together a summary of what each of the two major party candidates—President Barack Obama for the Democratic Party, and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney for the Republican Party—have said about their plans for K-12 education.

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/2012/09/24/candidates-where-i-stand-on-education/>

Where the Candidates Stand on Medicare and Medicaid

Medicare and Medicaid, which provide medical coverage for seniors, the poor and the disabled, together make up nearly a quarter of all federal spending. With total Medicare spending projected to cost \$7.7 trillion over the next 10 years, there is consensus that changes are in order. But what those changes should entail has, of course, been one of the hot-button issues of the campaign. Here's a rundown of where the two candidates stand on Medicare and Medicaid:

<http://tinyurl.com/btgo2jw>

Issue: Health Care

Few understand health reform implications

Despite 92 percent of U.S. adults being aware of healthcare reform, most lack a comprehensive understanding of how it may impact them, a survey indicates. The survey of 2,500 U.S. adults in July by TNS, a consulting group with offices in 80 countries, found 11 percent have a high level of understanding of most elements of the Affordable Care Act. Americans generally agree on the end goals for health reform -- appropriate and effective patient care, lower cost and easier access to coverage for all. But, among self-reported Republicans, 71 percent disagree with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act, while 9 percent agreed. Among Democrats, only 11 percent disagreed with the decision while 61 percent agreed. Fifty-one percent of Republicans said healthcare reform would address the issue of the uninsured being able to obtain coverage with pre-existing conditions, but 68 percent of Democrats did.

<http://tinyurl.com/ccvkfoj>

Health Reform 2.0: States Balking at New Insurance Exchanges

Under the Affordable Care Act, the Obama administration's controversial reform of health care, states are supposed to assist uninsured Americans in buying health coverage by setting up so-called "insurance exchanges." But, many states are dragging their heels on building the necessary infrastructure -- and some have outright refused to do so. This

lack of action poses a significant challenge to get the law up and running. "The ACA (Affordable Care Act) cannot be implemented without an insurance exchange in each state. It's a go or it's a no-go. It's that simple," said Robert Laszewski, president of Health Policy and Strategy Associates Inc., an Alexandria, Va.-based consulting firm. So far, only 15 states and the District of Columbia have established exchanges, and three others -- Arkansas, Delaware and Illinois -- have indicated that they will partner with the federal government to do it, according to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. The exchanges must ensure that each health plan offers a sufficient number of providers and meets other minimum standards. To participate in an exchange, an insurer must offer at least one "gold" and one "silver" health plan.

<http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=668433>

Health Reform 2.0: Governors Pushing Back on Medicaid Expansion

One of the main goals of the Affordable Care Act is to extend health insurance coverage to most uninsured Americans -- an estimated 30 million people. It does that for many lower-income people by expanding eligibility for Medicaid, the federal-state public health program currently covering more than 60 million low-income Americans. As of now, though, it appears that efforts to reduce the ranks of the uninsured will fall short of expectations. That's because a number of Republican governors are refusing to go along with the proposed expansion, and others are leaning in that direction. Medicaid eligibility rules vary widely from one state to another. In most states, low-income, non-disabled adults who aren't pregnant or don't have dependent children can't qualify for Medicaid coverage. Few states cover non-disabled parents at or above 100 percent of the federal poverty level -- currently \$19,090 for a family of three. The Affordable Care Act set out to close health insurance gaps by establishing a new minimum standard for Medicaid coverage. Effective January 2014, people under age 65 -- who aren't already Medicaid-eligible -- with incomes below 133 percent of the federal poverty level would be covered. If every state participated in the expansion, 15.1 million adults who are not currently Medicaid-eligible could get coverage, according to the Urban Institute, a liberal-leaning think tank on social, economic and governance issues. The Congressional Budget Office now estimates that 6 million fewer people will be enrolled in Medicaid by 2022 than the 15 million previously expected under the Affordable Care Act. Three million of those people will have incomes high enough to receive federal subsidies to purchase coverage through one of the new health insurance exchanges created under the law. But the remaining 3 million will not qualify for those subsidies and will remain uninsured.

<http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=668417>

Medicare Advantage's premiums down

Seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage programs are projected to increase by 11 percent next year with premiums remaining steady, a U.S. official says. Medicare Advantage, which allows seniors to leave traditional Medicare for a healthcare plan conducted by a private insurance company, had been costing 14 percent more to the taxpayer each year, and some feared as this subsidy was phased out Medicare Advantage's premiums would rise or benefits cut.

<http://tinyurl.com/bsj7e8e>

Health insurance costs grew slowly for two years. Now, they're speeding up.

U.S. spending on health insurance grew at an accelerated rate in 2011, breaking a two-year trend of smaller cost increases. The culprit, a new study suggests, is not Americans seeking more treatment but rather rapid growth in the price of medical care. "One thing Americans should realize is they're actually not heavier users of health care compared to Germans or Canadians," said Uwe Reinhardt, a health economist at Princeton University. "Utilization in the United States really isn't that different." Fast growth in the price of health care, however, meant that overall spending still increased. The price of the average emergency-room visit rose by 5.4 percent over the same period, hitting \$1,381 in 2011. The cost of professional procedures, such as doctor visits, rose 3.3 percent, while prescription drugs spiked by 17.7 percent.

<http://tinyurl.com/boal3ck>

Issue: Tax Policy

Five myths about the 47 percent

<http://tinyurl.com/cyoy5qx>

The 47 Percent, In Graphic Form

<http://www.kplu.org/post/47-percent-one-graphic>

Issue: Income Inequality

Our Disgraceful Minimum Wage By Jim Hightower

Nearly 4 million Americans are being paid at or below the desiccated federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. For a single mother with two kids, that's \$4,000 a year beneath the poverty level.

Corporate politicians and front groups have draped a thick tapestry of myths and excuses over the miserly wage. "The only people paid the minimum," goes one of their oldest dodges, "are teenagers working part-time summer jobs for extra cash." In fact, only 6.4 percent of these low-wage employees are teen part-timers. Contrary to the stereotype, the typical minimum-wage worker is an adult, white woman (including many single moms) whose family relies on her paycheck.

The one simple step that would immediately add juice to the consumer economy: Raise the spending power of millions of low-wage workers by hiking the legal minimum wage.

Raising it to \$10 an hour would elevate 30 million hardworking Americans now paid a poverty or near-poverty level income. While it would still be tough to raise a family on a \$10-an-hour wage (\$20,800 a year), it does move our country a lot closer to the principle that work ought to be fairly rewarded, restoring a measure of ethics to the work ethic.

Such a percolate-up solution would provide a huge and direct lift out of our present doldrums - a study last year by Chicago's Federal Reserve Bank found that every dollar increase in the minimum wage produces an immediate bump in the next year of \$2,800 per recipient in consumer purchases of everything from kids' shoes to vehicles. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) reported in a 2009 study that even a boost to \$9.50 an hour would result in \$30 billion a year in new consumer spending.

The public is overwhelmingly behind the increase. This June, a Zogby Analytics survey of likely voters found seven out of 10 supporting a raise above \$10 an hour (including 54 percent of Republicans). Notably, 71 percent of young people (18 to 23 years old) favored it. Likewise, last November's "American Values Survey" by the Public Religion Research Institute showed two-thirds of Americans in favor of a \$10-per-hour minimum. <http://tinyurl.com/bsn32s6>

More proof that raising the minimum wage is needed here in NYS. This would make an excellent question at any candidate forums for state office. The NYS Legislature may come back into session following Election Day – one of the items on their agenda might be a pay raise for themselves. What about the poorest of New Yorkers?

Inequality across the country, in two maps

The Census has calculated the Gini coefficients — the standard measure of income inequality — for each state, and the results aren't necessarily what you'd expect: New York is the most unequal state, followed by Connecticut, Louisiana and New Mexico (a motley crew if ever there was one), and Wyoming, Alaska, Utah, Hawaii and Vermont are the most equal. To some extent, this is a rural/urban divide. New York City has both a lot of poor people and a few extravagantly wealthy people, whereas there's no metropolis in Wyoming full of extremely rich folks. More generally, top earners tend to live in cities, as do the poor, so it makes sense that urban areas would be more unequal. <http://tinyurl.com/c5avl3j>

Issue: Food Stamps

Expert: Food stamp block grants ups hunger

Republicans and Democrats proposed cuts to restructuring food stamps, but modifying the program may lead to more food insecurity, a U.S. researcher says. Craig Gundersen of the University of Illinois said cutting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, former Food Stamp Program, is the wrong approach to fighting hunger. Gundersen said

what drives SNAP spending is the economy, when the economy improves the numbers on SNAP will go down.

<http://tinyurl.com/bswcf3x>

NYS Politics:

NY lawmakers spent \$6.8M on taxpayer-funded mailers

Constituents often receive a steady stream of mail from state lawmakers, and taxpayers pay for it. The public was on the hook for \$6.8 million in state spending on lawmakers' mail between October through March, the latest figures available, a review by Gannett's Albany Bureau shows. Critics said that while it's important for legislators to connect with their constituents, the mailers are usually campaign ads disguised as official business. "It should be content driven, and all too frequently what we see in these mailers are self promotion," said Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause/NY. Twenty-four lawmakers spent more than \$75,000 each over the six-month period on direct mail. The period's spending wasn't unique, and historically the spending ramps up closer to election time. All 213 seats in the Legislature are up for election this year. Legislators are prohibited from sending out official mailings and newsletters 30 days prior to a primary and 60 days before a general election. Prior to the 2010 elections, state lawmakers spent about \$7.8 million on mailers. And a majority of the money goes to the parties in power, which critics say creates an unfair advantage for incumbents. Lawmakers have allotments on how much they can generally spend on correspondence, which includes at least two district-wide mailers a year.

<http://tinyurl.com/c6lv8cb>

Spotlight on NYS Legislation:

New child porn law closes loophole

Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently signed a bill that will amend New York's Penal Law to punish people for knowingly accessing a Web site with the intent to view child pornography. Prior to the law being signed, accessing images under certain circumstances did not constitute "possession," thus preventing prosecution. This legislation also clarifies that the penalties for various possession, control and promotion of child pornography charges do not apply to attorneys because they may have to access these materials for research on court cases.

<http://tinyurl.com/cbdeq2n>

New law protects students from second-hand smoke

Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed two bills into law on Sept. 5, banning smoking within 100 feet of any elementary or secondary school, and also prohibiting the sale of "e-cigarettes," an alternative to tobacco, to minors. The new laws progress the state health departments three year plan toward a tobacco-free New York in 2013. According to a press release,

the laws are a necessary measure to protect children from the "particularly detrimental" side effects of second hand smoke.

<http://tinyurl.com/cg3kzfh>

These key advances for women's health and economic rights are under attack in this election year. Any of these would make a good Voter Education Forum topic or the focus of a candidate question:

1. Women's Right to Vote (1920)
 2. Social Security Act (1935)
 3. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 4. Medicare (1965)
 5. Medicaid (1965)
 6. Title X, The National Family Planning Program (1970)
 7. Title IX of the Education Amendments (1972)
 8. *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision (1973)
 9. The Violence Against Women Act (1994)
 10. The Affordable Care Act (2010)
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AAUW NYS Facebook:

Remember to "like" our state Facebook page and stay up to date with all the breaking news. <http://www.facebook.com/AAUW.NYS> Share things from our page to yours and help us build our social network for change!

Share your successes!