

AAUW-NYS GOTV Counterpart Newsletter Get Out The Vote!



Vol. 1
Issue No. 4

July 1, 2012

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The NYS Primary is Thursday, September 13

This will be an active primary season for state legislators, plus what offices may be on your local ballots. Prepare now for what you (and your community partners) will need to do to educate voters in your community about issues and candidates!

Many NY legislators retiring out of frustration

For about 30 state legislators, the drawbacks that include being away from home, constant criticism, little individual recognition and no raise in 13 years have become too much.

In what may be a record number, at least 25 Assembly members and at least four senators say they are retiring from the 212-seat Legislature. They have taken jobs with Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration, are running for Congress or in local government, or are just quitting.

For some, the motivation is loud and clear.

"This state is controlled by three people," bellowed Assemblyman Joel Miller, a Poughkeepsie Republican and 18-year veteran, during a floor debate. "The rest of us are really highly paid rubber stamps."

It's not a new complaint, but it's the core sentiment of many legislators who once ran cities, counties, businesses, law firms and classrooms before they got to Albany, where many found themselves limited.

New Yorkers who lose an incumbent will lack a representative with seniority, which matters in policy and spending decisions. For all New Yorkers, the result will be a Legislature with fewer middle-aged lawmakers still trying to balance family budgets and dealing with emerging issues seen firsthand by having children in school.

It's an odd underrepresentation of the traditional middle class but one that concerns lawmakers. What remains is an overrepresentation of lawmakers over 65 years old and former and part-time lawyers.

<http://tinyurl.com/77wvakj>

Your NYS Election districts may have changed!

It is imperative that you use the new Congressional, NYS Senate and NYS Assembly lines as you provide voter information and as you plan for Voter Guides and candidate events. Cities and towns that have been divided into 2 or more districts are listed on the front page of each of these LATFOR links. Please be aware also, that all district numbers have changed for state and Congressional districts, so ensure that you determine the correct district number.

- ♦ To find your new Congressional District(s) use this link
<http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/maps/?sec=2012c>
- ♦ To find your new NYS Senate District(s) use this link
<http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/maps/?sec=2012s>
- ♦ To find your new NYS Assembly District(s) use this link
<http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/maps/?sec=2012a>
- ♦ Or for maps you can zoom in on, use this link (click on dropdown at upper right under select a District Type for Assembly, Senate or Congress maps)
<http://www.urbanresearchmaps.org/nyredistricting/map.html>

You can find the **new district lines for your Congressional district** by going to the **2012 New York Congressional Maps** of the New York State Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR).

<http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/maps/?sec=2012c>

There is a map listing all the towns and counties in the new district, as well as a breakdown of the population information for the district.

More women are running for Congress!

The 2012 Project at Rutgers University reports that **291 women have filed to run for Congress with seven more expected to file** -- quite a boost from the previous high of 262.

“At only 17 percent female, the U.S. House of Representatives remains far from representative,” says Mary Hughes, founder of The 2012 Project. “For the first time in 20 years, women are poised to make significant gains in the upcoming election.” Hughes notes, “Research shows that women leaders introduce more bills, bring more resources home to their districts and advocate for new issues on the legislative agenda.”

Women and other newcomers have more success winning open seats, and the increased voter turnout in presidential year’s further boosts women candidates. The 2012 Project’s

goal for November is to emerge from this year's elections with a Congress that includes 20 percent women; that would far exceed the previous high of 17 percent.

<http://tinyurl.com/6tqatdd>

FEC Approves Text Message Donations

Two weeks ago the Federal Election Commission (FEC) approved campaign contributions via text message. This is a decision that may enhance the voice of small donors in a political system increasingly dominated by the wealthiest Americans.



Connecting With Young Voters:

Use this great video to start a conversation with young people about the struggle for the vote!

"Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage"

Bad Romance: Women's Suffrage is a parody music video paying homage to Alice Paul and the generations of brave women who joined together in the fight to pass the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote in 1920.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYQhRCs9IHM>

Registering Young Voters

The League of Women Voters Education Fund has again teamed up with **The Youth Leadership Initiative** (<http://tinyurl.com/853kpyx>) to create a lesson plan: This one focuses on encouraging high school voter registration. Preview the **lesson plan** (<http://tinyurl.com/7qms6u7>) and encourage teachers in your lives to register at the YLI website (<http://www.youthleadership.net/central/signup>) access supplemental materials and many more free resources related to civic education. Speaking of high schools, the Massachusetts League announced that 15 local Leagues teamed up to register 1,156 high school students to vote during a statewide voter drive this spring. And the Georgia League is organizing a statewide effort to register some of the state's 700,000 unregistered voters at MARTA transit stops. Great ideas!

Just when you thought you might be ready to dip a toe in the social media water....

Teens turn from Facebook to fresher social-media sites

Facebook appears to have competition for teens' attention, and they're drifting to other social-media sites as evidence mounts that the growth of the world's largest social network is slowing. Drawn to niche sites such as Foursquare and Tumblr, teens appear to be expanding beyond Facebook. According to market research firm YPulse, 18% of teens

prefer to "check in" on Foursquare instead of Facebook, and 10% say Pinterest is a better site for browsing. Facebook, which claims more than 900 million members, had 158 million unique visitors to its site in April, according to researcher ComScore, up just 5% from a year ago. That compares with year-over-year growth rates of 89% in April 2010. <http://tinyurl.com/86zbg6d>

Make sure your GOTV efforts include outreach to diverse groups:

Latino Growth Not Fully Felt at Voting Booth

In the 2008 presidential election, when a record 10 million Latinos showed up at the polls nationwide, that amounted to just half of the eligible voters. By contrast, 66 percent of eligible whites and 65 percent of eligible blacks voted, according to a study by the Pew Hispanic Center.

<http://tinyurl.com/7cf5to2>

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

Issue: Health Care

The Affordable Care Act Is Upheld by the Supreme Court!

The recent 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court to **uphold the Affordable Care Act offers some important protections for women:**

- ♦ Being a woman is no longer a "pre-existing condition." Women could be denied coverage for just being women before the Affordable Care Act was law.
- ♦ Insurance companies can't charge you more for being a woman either. Before the Affordable Care Act was law, women were sometimes charged up to 150% more than men of the same age.
- ♦ Breast cancer screenings, cervical cancer screenings, domestic violence counseling and screenings and a whole bunch of other preventive care measures must be covered by insurance companies.
- ♦ Birth control is now covered by health insurance.
- ♦ Children can stay on their parents' health insurance until they're 26 years old.
- ♦ And if you want to have kids, the law will help you get pre-natal care and counseling and help with breast feeding and supplies too.

There are important benefits for everyone:

- ♦ Insurance companies can't take away your coverage if you become too sick.
- ♦ You cannot be denied insurance coverage because of a pre-existing condition.
- ♦ Seniors receive a 50 percent discount on prescription drugs when they hit the "donut hole."
- ♦ Small businesses get tax credits to purchase insurance.
- ♦ There are no more lifetime limits on your coverage.

- ♦ 15 million more people will receive coverage because of expanded access to Medicaid. Millions of Americans are going to receive tax credits to help them get insurance--people who wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise.

And here in New York State:

- ♦ There are 2.8 million New Yorkers without health coverage and many more with inadequate coverage. Of the uninsured, over 200,000 are children. The ACA is already resulting in a decrease to the number of uninsured in New York.
 - ♦ As a result of the ACA:
 - ♦ 150,000 young adults now have health coverage;
 - ♦ 3,400 New Yorkers who were previously unable to obtain coverage due to pre-existing conditions are now covered;
 - ♦ More than 280,000 small businesses now have access to tax credits to help them obtain employee health benefits;
 - ♦ More than 3 million New Yorkers with private coverage now have access to free preventive care;
 - ♦ All 1,609,000 children in New York have benefitted from the prohibition on lifetime limits; and
 - ♦ All insurance companies are no longer allowed to cancel policies or impose arbitrary caps when an individual becomes sick.
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But just because provisions of the ADA were held constitutional, don't think that health care won't be a hot topic for this fall!

Most Americans oppose health law but like provisions

Most Americans oppose President Barack Obama's healthcare reform even though they strongly support most of its provisions, a Reuters/Ipsos poll showed on a week before the Supreme Court ruling. Strong majorities favor most of what is in the law. A glaring exception to the popular provisions is the "individual mandate," which forces all U.S. residents to own health insurance. Sixty-one percent of Americans are against the mandate, the issue at the center of the Republicans' contention that the law is unconstitutional, while 39 percent favor it. In good news for Republicans at November's congressional elections, 45 percent said they were more likely to vote for a member of Congress who campaigned on a platform of repealing the law, versus 26 percent who said it would make them less likely, the survey showed.

Support for the provisions of the healthcare law was strong, with a full 82 percent of survey respondents, for example, favoring banning insurance companies from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions. Sixty-one percent are in favor of allowing children to stay on their parents' insurance until age 26 and 72 percent back requiring companies with more than 50 employees to provide insurance for their employees.

Republicans have dominated the political message on healthcare with calls to "repeal and replace" the law, condemned by conservatives as a government intrusion into private

industry and the lives of private citizens. It passed in March 2010 with no Republican support in Congress.

A good portion of the opposition to the healthcare law is because Americans want more reform, not less of it. The poll found that a large number of Americans - including about one-third of Republicans and independents who disagree with the law - oppose it because it does not go far enough to fix healthcare.

<http://tinyurl.com/7ovtvem>

What is needed is a rational discussion about health care and health care delivery without the lens of party politics. Perhaps this is a good topic for a **Voter Education Forum in your community before Election Day!**

Communities of Solution: The Folsom Report Revisited

Efforts to address the current fragmented US health care structure, including controversial federal reform, cannot succeed without a reinvigoration of community-centered health systems. A blueprint for systematic implementation of community services exists in the 1967 Folsom Report-calling for "communities of solution." We propose an updated vision of the Folsom Report for integrated and effective services, incorporating the principles of community-oriented primary care. The 21st century primary care physician must be a true public health professional, forming partnerships and assisting data sharing with community organizations to facilitate healthy changes. Current policy reform efforts should build upon Folsom Report's goal of transforming personal and population health.

By the American Board of Family Medicine Young Leaders Advisory Group

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22585890>

Issue: Access to Birth Control

Poll finds wide support for cheap birth-control access

According to a poll commissioned by Planned Parenthood and the National Women's Law Center, just under three in four voters support women's access to affordable prescription birth control, including 55 percent who said they "strongly" agree with that access. Supporters included 54 percent of voters who identified themselves as "pro-life" and 66 percent of Catholics, the survey found. All supporters affirmed that "we should do everything we can to make sure that people who want to use prescription birth control have affordable access to it, and that cost is not an obstacle."

<http://tinyurl.com/7dbk73y>

Resource: Family Planning Advocates of New York

<http://www.familyplanningadvocates.org/>

Family Planning Advocates of New York represents hundreds of family planning health care centers, including New York's Planned Parenthoods.

The international aspect of family planning matters because it is usually a political football in Congress over funding.

UN agency chief sees need to put family planning back on global ‘radar’

The head of the United Nations Population Fund wants the world to pay more attention to family planning issues. Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin told The Associated Press that “family planning seems to have fallen off the radar” in the past two decades — a victim of politics, funding shortages and focus on other priorities such as fighting AIDS. He said Tuesday that 220 million women lack adequate information about family planning or a regular supply of contraceptives. He hopes a July 11 summit in London organized by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the British government will increase attention to the need for better family planning in poor countries. Osotimehin is a medical doctor and former Nigerian health minister. His U.N. agency provides population data to fight poverty and disease.

<http://tinyurl.com/7n9w8hu>

Why having women in high places changes the conversation at the table.

Rio+20 earth summit: Why Hillary Clinton won applause for statement on women

The UN's Rio+20 earth summit set only modest goals, but sparked controversy over the Vatican's successful effort to remove reference to 'reproductive rights' from the final document. Hillary Clinton vowed the US would ensure 'those rights are respected.' The United Nations' global summit on sustainable development concluded in Rio de Janeiro Friday with only modest and nonbinding goals, and in the eyes of some critics it even took a giant step backwards – by eliminating from its final document any reference to women's “reproductive rights” of women.

The document still advocates universal access to family planning and the integration of reproductive health into national development strategies. But a reference to reproductive rights – language similar to wording that has long been included in development and women-advancement summits' statements – was stricken, while the Vatican prevailed in its opposition to a phrase that called “access to reproductive health services” an important element of women's empowerment.

Numerous world summits have called on governments to recognize the role that reproductive health plays in advancing women's health and economic well-being since a 1994 Cairo summit on population and development declared for the first time that women's human rights include reproductive rights.

<http://tinyurl.com/7p6aazz>

Issue: Parental Leave

We're Not Sick or on Break; We're Having a Baby

Christina Caldwell writes, It's time to do something about the lack of paid parental leave in the **United States**. Does anyone realize that this deprivation leaves us in the company of such under-developed countries as **Papua New Guinea and Swaziland? Out of 181 countries** studied by Harvard and McGill, **we are the only three countries with no paid parental leave.**

Public health officials encourage us to provide exclusive breastfeeding for six months, but that's all but impossible when mothers are expected to report back to duty within days. Before they get a solid breastfeeding routine established many women go through all kinds of adjustments. If new mothers are expected to be right back at work the whole breastfeeding project can easily fall apart.

The Family Medical Leave Act does protect an employee's job security for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave. But the **16 percent of U.S. companies that do offer paid leave have much lower turnover than those where the leave is unpaid.**

<http://tinyurl.com/7kft3rp>

Resource: The New York State Paid Family Leave Coalition

<http://www.timetocareny.org/index.html>

In the US, **only 11% of workers have access to paid family leave through their employers**— barely one in 10 people. In fact, the United States is the only developed country that doesn't ensure that parents can take paid family leave after a child is born or gets sick, or to take care of aging family members.

Paid family leave is good for the economy. Recent research from the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers shows that:

- ♦ Women who take paid leave are 39% less likely to need or receive public assistance
- ♦ Women who take paid leave are 40% less likely to need or receive food stamps in the year following a child's birth when compared to those who do not take any leave
- ♦ Paid family leave also reduces the chance that a family receiving public assistance will increase its use of public funding following a child's birth
- ♦ Women who use paid leave are more likely to be working 9-12 months after a child's birth than those who do not take any leave
- ♦ And these women also report increases in wages before and after birth

Study author Linda Houser notes: "While we have known for a long time about the maternal and infant health benefits of leave policies, **we can now link paid family leave to greater labor force attachment and increased wages for women as well as to reduced**

spending by businesses in the form of employee replacement costs, and by governments in the form of public assistance.”

Issue: The Economy and Jobs (especially for young people)

Jobs, the high cost of college, and student debt burdens remain the most pressing issues for students. How can your branch start the conversation at colleges in your area? Are political candidates addressing these concerns? This would make a terrific GOTV voter education round table this fall, hosted by AAUW.

No Improvement in Job Market for Young College Grads, Some Deterioration, New Report Reveals

Even as the job market has rebounded over the last two years, the employment prospects for young college graduates have continued to deteriorate, according to a new report by Dr. Paul E. Harrington and Dr. Neeta P. Fogg, labor economists in Drexel University's Center for Labor Market and Policy. Rather, even during this period of net job creation, young college graduates saw their employment rates fall at the same time as their mal-employment rates increased. The report reveals that there was a sizable decline between the winter-spring of 2007 and 2012 in the proportion of all young college graduates who worked in a college labor market job; a decline from 54.1 percent to 43.9 percent among 20- to 24-year-olds and 63.9 percent to 56.7 percent among 25- to 29-year-olds. A sizeable part of these declines occurred in the jobs recovery period over the last two years. "The promise of an economic return to a college investment is, at its most fundamental level, found in the labor market," said Dr. Harrington. "The ability of young Americans to prosper through investments in human capital has diminished as access to jobs that utilize the skills, knowledge and abilities developed in college has declined."

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120620132928.htm>

Report Predicts Huge Gap in Educated Workers

By 2020, there will be about 38 million to 40 million too few college and university graduates to satisfy the demands of the global labor market, a report issued this month has found. At the same time, there will be a surplus of up to 95 million low-skill workers globally, according to the study, conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute.

“Unemployment for less skilled workers is currently running two to three times that of those skilled workers with university or post-graduate degrees,” said Richard Dobbs, one of the authors of the report. China will have to increase its educated work force in order to fulfill its need for 23 million high-skill workers by 2020, the report said. The report suggested that the shortage of high-skill workers could be avoided by doubling the rate of post-secondary education attainment, retraining midcareer workers and encouraging the migration of educated workers.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/us/25iht-educbriefs25.html>

Ask yourself what it would mean if nations that needed those skilled workers said to young US citizens, burdened by huge student debt loads and no job prospects: We open our doors to you as welcomed immigrants – leave your debt behind and work for us as full citizens. Think it can't happen? An entire generation of American young people has very dim future employment prospects right now. For centuries, people have packed up and moved for worse reasons.

Recession generation has adulthood on hold

More than half of the 18- to 24-year-olds surveyed in March by the Pew Research Center said they live with parents now or had recently because of the economy. Among those ages 25 to 29, 41 per cent had done the same at some point. These job seekers were cranking out resumes and trying to enter the workforce just as the unemployment rate for young adults hit its highest point since 1948, when data tracking began. Sometimes called the "Lost Generation," their slow start out of the economic blocks could affect the nature of the middle class far into the future. "They can't get their foot on the bottom rung of their career ladder," said Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington. "Research shows their wages will be scarred for their entire lifetimes. They are less likely to get fringe benefits like health care. The jobs they get pay worse." Job seekers under age 25 typically are the biggest losers in economic downturns and the current crop is no exception. Nationally, unemployment for them peaked at 18.4 per cent in 2010.

<http://tinyurl.com/7x432th>

No College Education, Fewer Job Prospects

Just 27 percent of recent high school graduates without a college education have full-time jobs, according to a new national survey from New Jersey's Rutgers University. It shows that although the U.S. economy has been registering growth, the work situation for young people without postsecondary degrees has remained dire. According to the report, which was conducted in April, nearly one in three of the young people surveyed are unemployed, and another 15 percent are working part-time and looking for full-time work. Among those who are working, 90 percent are paid hourly, with the median hourly wage for full-time workers just \$9.25—barely sufficient to keep them out of poverty. Noncollege-going high school graduates also feel the effects of "mal-employment," said sociologist David Elesh of Temple University in Philadelphia, a co-principal investigator on the Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project, which focuses on quality of life in that region. Such underemployment occurs when college graduates take high school labor-market jobs because their own opportunities are limited. A previous study by the Heldrich center found that only half of recent college graduates are in jobs that require a college education.

<http://tinyurl.com/7v3an6e>

Issue: The Media Effect in Politics

The skinny on Political Ads:

Political Ads by Independent Groups Are Not Only Common -- They Are More Effective

As the election season ramps up, many voters are already experiencing attack ad fatigue. With the rise of the so-called Super PACs and greatly increased spending by independent groups more generally, many election watchers are anticipating that there will be far more ads -- and far more attack ads -- on the airwaves in this election than ever before. According to a recent article in American Politics Research, a SAGE journal, **the power of ads sponsored by independent groups rests not just in their sheer volume, but also in their relative effectiveness. When an attack ad is sponsored by an independent group, the authors found that the ad is far more effective than when the same ad is sponsored by a candidate.**

"This study indicates that candidates have every reason to hope for an unofficial division of labor, in which independent groups that are unaccountable to voters will do the dirty work of running these kinds of harsh attack ads that the candidates would rather not do themselves," wrote study authors Deborah Jordan Brooks and Michael Murov.

Regardless of sponsorship, Brooks and Murov found that **the ads were similarly persuasive regarding the flaws of the candidate who was the target of the ad. The difference was that public penalized a candidate for sponsoring such an ad with what is known as a "backlash" effect. Because there was far less backlash aimed towards the benefitting candidate if the ad sponsor was an independent group, the attack was far more effective** when it was sponsored by Citizens for a Better State Government than by the candidate himself.

The authors also suggest that since there is reduced potential of backlash from voters, independent groups may face incentives to produce highly controversial advertisements while facing relatively few incentives to be truthful in ads.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/06/120626121523.htm>

Women aren't principal news sources on women's issues, 4th Estate analysis finds

Men have long been the predominant sources for the news media on issues such as the economy, politics and the military. And a new analysis of campaign coverage found that women aren't even the principal news source on a topic they would presumably know best: women's issues. Major news outlets, print and TV, turn mainly to male sources for their take on abortion, birth control and Planned Parenthood, according to a study by 4th Estate (<http://www.4thestate.net/>), a research group that monitors campaign coverage.

Women don't even rate as the most common sources for reports about "women's rights," a catch-all category that excludes reproductive issues, the group said. Women accounted for less than a third, or 31 percent, of the sources in these reports, with men in the

majority, 52 percent, and institutions and organizations comprising the balance. It concluded: **“The gender gap undermines the media’s credibility.”** Women’s groups said the study reflects the under-representation of women in the media and among the elites whose views are most often sought by journalists. “There’s been an ongoing complaint among women leaders that women’s voices simply are not there,” said Terry O’Neill, president of the National Organization for Women. **“When Congress is only 17 percent female, when women are 3 percent of the CEOs and only 15 percent of [top corporate executives], you don’t have critical mass. What happens is that women aren’t there. We’re not noticed.”** Julie Burton, president of the **Women’s Media Center**— which was founded by activist Gloria Steinem, actor Jane Fonda and writer Robin Morgan — said 4th Estate’s research confirms her organization’s findings that **women’s “views and voices” are missing in print, television, radio, online and in film.** It “underscores the critical need to hold media accountable for an equal voice and equal representation. The problem is that the public hears only half of the story,” she said. (<http://www.womensmediacenter.com/>)
<http://tinyurl.com/779fx6z>

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:

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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