



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

FEBRUARY 2009

PRESIDENT: KAY SHARP 272-4748  
MEMBERSHIP: KATHLEEN YEN 257-8199

EDITOR: ROBERT SILSBEE 273-1436  
[www.lwvtompkins.14850.com](http://www.lwvtompkins.14850.com)

## LUNCHEON MEETING

### THE STATE BUDGET AND THE SCHOOLS

Panel Discussion with

#### Superintendents of All Tompkins County School Districts

Saturday, **March 7** at  
The Women's Community Building

Lunch and Conversation: from Noon  
Program Starts at 12:30 PM  
Read more below

### MORE ON THE LUNCHEON MEETING

The February meeting, that opportunity to enjoy delectable soups, breads and desserts provided by your Board, had to be postponed to Saturday **March 7**. (The food will still be freshly prepared, however.) The luncheon will be held at the Women's Community Building at 100 West Seneca St. The buffet will be served at noon and we ask for a contribution of five dollars to defray the luncheon expenses. Please reserve a place by phone (272-5214) or e-mail [flosmith42@aol.com](mailto:flosmith42@aol.com) to Florence Smith. If you are unable to attend the luncheon, feel free to join us for the presentations, beginning at 12:30.

You've been hearing a lot from Albany about budget shortfalls. This is your chance to learn about the impact on local schools from the people who really know. Superintendents from all of the Tompkins County school districts

would like to share their concerns and outlooks with you with brief presentations and a panel discussion.

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### VOTER SERVICE REPORT

Life for Voter Services has been quiet since the November election, but should be getting busier soon. On March 11 there is planned a Candidates Forum for candidates for Trustees of Cayuga Heights. The meeting will be held at Kendal and the League has agreed to supply timekeepers.

Also, coming up on May 7 is a Candidates Forum for Ithaca School Board. The League will sponsor this with the PTA Council. Stay tuned for more information.

"The primary objective of Voter Service is to encourage citizens to register and vote, and to

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provide them with accurate, nonpartisan information about the issues, the candidates, and the political process, which they can use as a basis for decision-making." (from Handbook for Voter Service Directors) This does not mean just activities leading up to elections. I would like to do more between elections, particularly impressing upon young people the importance of voting, doing more with new citizens -- there are many more things we could be doing. Why aren't we doing more? Voter Service has been a committee of one for the past year. Let's change that. If you are interested in working on such a committee, please call me, Debbie Levin at 273-7746 or e-mail dlevin01@twcny.rr.com.

Debbie Levin

the environment, and promoting sustainability and responsible use of resources.)

Panelists include Judy Saul (Community Dispute Resolution Center), Gay Nicholson (Sustainable Tompkins), Betsy Darlington (Finger Lakes Land Trust), Wendy Skinner (SewGreen), Sharon Anderson (Cornell Cooperative Extension), Tina Nilsen-Hodges (New Roots Charter School), and Linda Waganet (Community Retirees Group; Cornell University)

Please keep the date and time open and help us honor local women and learn more about local environmental initiatives.

Kathleen Yen

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**“WOMEN MAKING HISTORY”  
THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2009**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

The City Federation of Women’s Organizations invites you to celebrate **“Women Making History Day”** at the Women’s Community Building, 100 West Seneca Street, Ithaca, New York, on **March 26, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.** The evening will be the culminating event of Women’s History Month.

**Reception and Open House**

There will be a reception and open house prior to the formal program at 7:00 p.m. The “Women Making History” TIMELINE will be on display and community organizations will have display tables.

**Program**

Awards Ceremony

The awards ceremony will honor and celebrate the visions and accomplishments of local women nominated from the community and by the member organizations.

**Panel Presentation**

The panel presentation will address environmental issues (preserving and protecting

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**“KNOW YOUR SCHOOLS”  
PUBLICATION COMMITTEE**

The “Know Your Schools” publication update is underway. The next committee meeting will be in April. The date and time will be in the Bulletin and on the LWV-TC web site.

The booklet is intended to serve as a resource for Tompkins County residents and provide information about the range and scope of educational services and facilities in the area. The information will be available in pdf format to view or print, and as paper booklet. Distribution will include individuals, libraries, schools, government offices, and community agencies.

Please call Kathleen (257-8199) if you are interested in working on this committee.

Committee Members: Kathleen Yen (chair), Kay Sharp, Kathy Burlitch, Deborah O’Connor, Ceil Spero, Margaret Myers, and Peggy Robinson (family liaison-ICSD), and Rachel Richards (PTA Council liaison)

## CALL TO CONVENTION 2009

The LWV-NYS Biennial Convention will be May 15-17 at the Doubletree Inn in Syracuse, NY. The Convention theme will be "Fair, Vibrant and Strong". In addition to planning our program, electing a new board, adopting by-laws changes and a new budget, we will have helpful workshops, interesting and informative presentations, a special presidents' meeting, great speakers and entertainment, good food, and fun.

Mark your calendars and consider being part of Convention 2009, either as a delegate of your local League or as an observer. This is your opportunity to be sure the concerns of your community and your local League are represented at the Convention. Most important, working with other League members and seeing New York State League leaders in action is something you won't want to miss. For more information call Kay Sharp at 272-4748.

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### "STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY" CONFERENCE APRIL 19 – APRIL 22, 2009

Sponsored by the League of Women voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc.

*Students Inside Albany* (SIA) is a student conference sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc. The program is designed to increase high school students' awareness of their responsibility in representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility.

The conference brings together high school students from across the state to learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy making arena. Students will have the opportunity to tour the New York State Capitol and to shadow their legislator.

The League of Women Voters of Tompkins County will sponsor one high school student from the area to participate in this exciting state program. The four-day conference costs (room and board) are covered by LWV-NYS and the local League will reimburse car/bus transportation to the four-day convention.

Information about and applications for the April Conference will be sent to area high school guidance departments.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Yen, 257-8199.

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### ARCURI MEETING

Lucia Armstrong and Rebecca Elgie joined 4 members of the Cortland LWV to meet with Congressman Arcuri on January 24th to discuss the questions developed by national re: federal issues.

1) Health coverage for all Americans: Although concerned about how a national plan can be financed, Mr. Arcuri stated that he was beginning to lean toward a single payer system. He supported his view by describing a physical therapist whose insurance payment for treatment hasn't risen in ten years (\$45), while the patient's co-pay has gone from \$5 to \$25-30 in the same time, and the insurance rates have increased as well. He had concerns about insurance workers in the district who might become unemployed. That issue is being addressed in new versions of a single payer plan. Mr Arcurie expects to be attending committee and other meetings in Washington as health care moves to the forefront of agendas.

2) In reference to the question of whether he supports legislation to cap greenhouse gas emissions, he responded that he is in agreement with almost all environmental actions, including this one, that protect the environment, and sees climate change as a serious threat. He added

that China and other major polluters need to be involved — a major challenge at present. We mentioned that potential job losses in the insurance field (with health care changes) could be balanced by new opportunities in the area of environmental technology and construction. As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Arcuri and others are working on the development of a high speed rail system to span the state, from Niagara Falls to Albany to New York City.

3) On the issue of partisanship in the nation's capitol, Mr. Arcuri said there was no way to remove it; it's a fact of political life. The Rules Committee that he sits on is very partisan, while Transportation is much less so. He feels that President Obama is setting an example of decreasing partisanship by not pursuing indictments of members of the previous administration, which may influence other Democrats to follow suit. He observed that the news media often encourages and highlights partisan politics, and that the public may perceive a government that is more acrimonious than it is in actuality. He said he works hard to continue dialogue with Republicans and to work with them to come to agreement.

Rebecca Elgie

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## FOCUS ON NPV

### PROGRAM REPORT: JANUARY MEETING ON NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

The LWV met on Monday evening, January 26. Professor Donald Beachler spoke on the topic of The National Popular Vote, to an audience of 27 League members and guests.

Sunny Gooding, the chair of the National Popular Vote Compact Study Committee spoke briefly. She explained that the National League was evaluating the NPV Compact, an effort to ensure the presidency goes to the

candidate who receives the most votes nationwide, without the need to amend the constitution

Florence Smith introduced the Speaker, Donald Beachler, who has taught at Ithaca College for 21 years in politics, government and law. He gave an interesting, informative talk using amusing anecdotes to highlight his important points.

He explained that the constitution was based on the political views of our founders. When George Washington and the Representatives of the original 13 colonies signed the constitution in 1787, only men who owned property could vote. The Electoral College System was put in place because the general public was considered too ignorant to make such an important decision.

Prof. Beachler reviewed the attitudinal changes that have taken place about the fairness of the presidential elections during the past 200 years. Movements to reform or eliminate the Electoral College developed, especially during the 4 times in the history of the U.S. when the President elected was NOT the candidate with the most popular votes.

After the drawn out election of George W. Bush many joint resolutions to reform or eliminate the Electoral College were introduced to the House of Representatives, then referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. No action has been taken. However, the National Popular Vote Compact is gaining momentum as State Legislatures consider and pass National Popular Vote Bills.

Prof. Beachler's talk was followed by much lively discussion during the question and answer period. Many people stayed after the program to continue their conversations, evidence that the evening was a success.

Florence Smith

## YOUR STUDY COMMITTEE

The National Popular Vote Study Committee continues to prepare for the consensus meeting on March 23. We urge you to develop your own opinion by reading the Compact and pro- and con- articles which follow. The consensus questions will appear in the March bulletin.

Next meeting of the NPV Study Group will be Friday Feb. 20th at noon at Kendal. For more information call Synnova Gooding at 277-3598.

Synnova Gooding

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## AGREEMENT AMONG THE STATES TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT BY NATIONWIDE POPULAR VOTE

### Article I - Membership

Any state of the United States and the District of Columbia may become a member of this agreement by enacting this agreement.

### Article II – Right of the People in Member States to Vote for President and Vice President

Each member state shall conduct a statewide popular election for President and Vice President of the United States

### Article III – Manner of Appointing Presidential Electors in Member States

Prior to the time set by law for the meeting and voting by the presidential electors, the chief election official of each member state shall determine the number of votes for each presidential slate in each State of the United States and in the District of Columbia in which votes have been cast in a statewide popular election and shall add such votes together to produce a “national popular vote total” for each presidential slate.

The chief election official of each member state shall designate the presidential slate with the largest national popular vote total as the “national popular vote winner.”

The presidential elector certifying official of each member state shall certify the appointment in that official’s own state of the elector slate nominated in that state in association with the national popular vote winner.

At least six days before the day fixed by law for the meeting and voting by the presidential electors, each member state shall make a final determination of the number of popular votes cast in the state for each presidential slate and shall communicate an official statement of such determination within 24 hours to the chief election official of each other member state.

The chief election official of each member state shall treat as conclusive an official statement containing the number of popular votes in a state for each presidential slate made by the day established by federal law for making a state’s final determination conclusive as to the counting of electoral votes by Congress.

In event of a tie for the national popular vote winner, the presidential elector certifying official of each member state shall certify the appointment of the elector slate nominated in association with the presidential slate receiving the largest number of popular votes within that official’s own state. If, for any reason, the number of presidential electors nominated in a member state in association with the national popular vote winner is less than or greater than that state’s number of electoral votes, the presidential candidate on the presidential slate that has been designated as the national popular vote winner shall have the power to nominate the presidential electors for that state and that state’s presidential elector certifying official shall certify the appointment of such nominees. The chief election official of each member state shall immediately release to the public all vote counts or statements of votes as they are determined or obtained.

This article shall govern the appointment of presidential electors in each member state in any year in which this agreement is, on July 20, in effect in states cumulatively possessing a majority of the electoral votes.

#### Article IV – Other Provisions

This agreement shall take effect when states cumulatively possessing a majority of the electoral votes have enacted this agreement in substantially the same form and the enactments by such states have taken effect in each state.

Any member state may withdraw from this agreement, except that a withdrawal occurring six months or less before the end of a President's term shall not become effective until a President or Vice President shall have been qualified to serve the next term.

The chief executive of each member state shall promptly notify the chief executive of all other states of when this agreement has been enacted and has taken effect in that official's state, when the state has withdrawn from this agreement, and when this agreement takes effect generally.

This agreement shall terminate if the electoral college is abolished.

If any provision of this agreement is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

#### Article V – Definitions

For purposes of this agreement, "chief executive" shall mean the Governor of a State of the United States or the Mayor of the District of Columbia; "elector slate" shall mean a slate of candidates who have been nominated in a state for the position of presidential elector in association with a presidential slate; "chief election official" shall mean the state official or body that is authorized to certify the total number of popular votes for each presidential slate; "presidential elector" shall mean an elector for President and Vice President of the United States; "presidential elector certifying official" shall mean the state official or body that is authorized to certify the appointment of the state's presidential electors; "presidential slate" shall mean a slate of two persons, the first of whom has been nominated as a candidate for President of the United States and the second of whom has been nominated as a candidate for

Vice President of the United States, or any legal successors to such persons, regardless of whether both names appear on the ballot presented to the voter in a particular state; "state" shall mean a State of the United States and the District of Columbia; and "statewide popular election" shall mean a general election in which votes are cast for presidential slates by individual voters and counted on a statewide basis.

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### DISCUSSION OF THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT

Because the League already supports direct election of the president, arguments against the Electoral College (EC) are not included in the material supporting the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact).

Constitutional Issues The NPV Compact is a way to assure that every person's vote counts equally and that the person receiving the most votes is the winner of the presidency. The same result would be achieved by constitutional amendment but the U.S. Constitution is difficult to amend. The NPV Compact is a viable way to attain the same goal as amending the Constitution to eliminate the EC.

A constitutional amendment is not needed to effectuate the NPV Compact because states already have the right to implement changes in how electors are appointed.

The NPV Compact is a compact between states – a method of concerted state action that has long been sanctioned by the Constitution and the courts.

Evaluating Fairness A candidate can be elected president by receiving the most electoral votes even though he or she did not receive the most popular votes. This is not a result voters expect or desire. As election campaigns are now waged, major emphasis and resources are

concentrated in key EC battleground states because that is where elections are won or lost. The NPV Compact would eliminate the emphasis on battleground states and would be more apt to assure campaign strategies that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate which would foster greater voter participation. The argument that the plan would negatively impact states' rights is countered by poll results showing that most voters want their individual vote to count, rather than allotting them to electors representing the state as a whole. Any claim that the NPV Compact is an unprecedented disregard for the U.S. Constitution ignores the reality that voting rights have been changed through state action many times. Women's suffrage, for example, was instituted by twenty states before passage of the constitutional amendment that made the right universal

Mechanical Considerations Those opposed to the NPV Compact cite mechanical issues that might lead the NPV to fail, but the Compact includes provisions that address issues of enforcement, winning levels and recounts.

Other Issues The Voting Rights Act and the NPV Compact are in harmony, assuring equality of votes throughout the United States.

League Issues Opponents say that the NPV Compact conflicts with the League's support of uniform voting standards. Supporters of the Compact advocate its passage in all states, which would result in uniform voting standards. It is true that the NPV Compact could be in effect for an interlude when not all states had signed on to it. The same could be demonstrated for other laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that uniform voting standards are not now in effect. The NPV Compact could help assure that every vote would be counted equally. Further, implementation of a method which assures direct election of the president by popular vote is in keeping with the League's long-held position.

**To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee.**

**LWV-TC CALENDAR—2008-2009**

7:00	Mon.	Mar. 2	BOARD MEETING	Old Jail
<b>noon</b>	<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Mar. 7</b>	<b>LUNCH MEETING—School Superintendents — Panel</b>	<b>Wmn. Comm. Bldg.</b>
<b>7:00</b>	<b>Wed.</b>	<b>Mar. 11</b>	<b>CANDIDATES' FORUM: Cayuga Heights Election</b>	<b>Kendal at Ithaca</b>
<b>7:00</b>	<b>Mon.</b>	<b>Mar. 23</b>	<b>CONSENSUS MEETING — National Popular Vote</b>	<b>Wmn. Comm. Bldg.</b>
7:00	Mon.	Apr. 6	BOARD MEETING	Alene Wyatt
<b>7:00</b>	<b>Mon.</b>	<b>Apr. 27</b>	<b>ANNUAL MEETING—Health Care Roundtable</b>	<b>Salvation Army</b>
7:00	Mon.	May 4	BOARD MEETING	Kathy Burlitch
<b>7:00</b>	<b>Thur.</b>	<b>May 7</b>	<b>CANDIDATES' FORUM—ICSD School Board</b>	<b>IHS Cafeteria</b>
7:00	Mon.	June 1	BOARD MEETING	Kay Sharp
<b>noon-</b>				
<b>9:00</b>	<b>Tues.</b>	<b>May 19</b>	<b>SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS</b>	

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTER OF TOMPKINS COUNTY**  
**2008-2009 Membership List (LWV-TC Purposes Only)**  
**February 1, 2009**

**Officers**

272-4748	President	Kay Sharp	<a href="mailto:kshepherdqueen@yahoo.com">kshepherdqueen@yahoo.com</a>
272-5214	V.P. Program	Florence Smith	<a href="mailto:flosmith42@aol.com">flosmith42@aol.com</a>
257-8199	V.P. Membership	Kathleen Yen	<a href="mailto:kyen@twcnny.rr.com">kyen@twcnny.rr.com</a>
277-3598	V.P. Finance	Sunny Gooding	<a href="mailto:shgooding@clarityconnect.com">shgooding@clarityconnect.com</a>
272-5769	Secretary	Barbara Caldwell	<a href="mailto:bcaldwel@twcnny.rr.com">bcaldwel@twcnny.rr.com</a>
257-1894	Treasurer	Alene Wyatt	<a href="mailto:alene@lightlink.com">alene@lightlink.com</a>

**Directors**

273-1436	Bulletin	Robert Silsbee	<a href="mailto:rhs1@cornell.edu">rhs1@cornell.edu</a>
257-6678	Director-at-large	Libby deProsse	<a href="mailto:deprosse@lightlink.com">deprosse@lightlink.com</a>
277-4404	Director-at-large	Maria Eisner	<a href="mailto:mle3@cornell.edu">mle3@cornell.edu</a>
257-6450	Action	Mary Berkelman	<a href="mailto:mberkelman@netscape.net">mberkelman@netscape.net</a>
539-7316	Publications/Public Relations	Kathy Burlitch	<a href="mailto:kburlitch@frontiernet.net">kburlitch@frontiernet.net</a>
277-0006	Communications	Linda Duttweiler	<a href="mailto:ldutt@twcnny.rr.com">ldutt@twcnny.rr.com</a>
273-7746	Voter Service	Debbie Levin	<a href="mailto:dlevin01@twcnny.rr.com">dlevin01@twcnny.rr.com</a>

**Off-Board Directors**

277-0006	Webmaster	Michael Duttweiler	<a href="mailto:mdutt@twcnny.rr.com">mdutt@twcnny.rr.com</a>
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**Study Committee Chairpersons****Unmet Needs of Young Children Living in Poverty in Tompkins County**

Libby deProsse, Chairperson	257-6678	<a href="mailto:deprosse@lightlink.com">deprosse@lightlink.com</a>
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**Health Care (LWV-US study)**

Rebecca Elgie, Chairperson	272-0621	<a href="mailto:healthylink@earthlink.net">healthylink@earthlink.net</a>
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**National Popular Vote (LWV-US study)**

Sunny Gooding, Chairperson	277-3598	<a href="mailto:shgooding@clarityconnect.com">shgooding@clarityconnect.com</a>
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**Key:**

**I** Individual membership  
**H** Household membership  
**Hon** Honorary membership  
**N** National membership  
**F** "Friend of the League"

Addresses are Ithaca, NY 14850 unless noted otherwise below.

Key	Tel #	Last	First Name	Address	E-Mail
I	257-6352	Allee	Mrs. Martha	440 Savage Farm Drive	<a href="mailto:mallee@lightlink.com">mallee@lightlink.com</a>
I	257-2748	Armstrong	Lucia	15 Horizon Drive	<a href="mailto:larmstro@twcnny.rr.com">larmstro@twcnny.rr.com</a>
I	272-2585	Baker	Ms. Beverly	320 S. Geneva Street	
I		Bancroft-Gowin	Ms. D. G.	100 West Buffalo Street, Apt. 3A	
I		Batt	Rosemary	60 Genung Circle	
Hon	266-8244	Bechhofer	Ms. Joan	313 Savage Farm Drive	
N	387-3476	Beins	Ms. Linda	47 Cayuga Street, Trumansburg, New York 14886	
H	257-6450	Berkelman	Mr. Karl	380 The Parkway	
H	257-6450	Berkelman	Ms. Mary	380 The Parkway	<a href="mailto:mberkelman@twcnny.rr.com">mberkelman@twcnny.rr.com</a>
N	273-0682	Berthelson	Ms. Barbara	1249 Trumansburg Road, Apt. 4	
I		Bethe	Ms. Rose	324 Savage Farm Drive	<a href="mailto:mbethe@yahoo.com">mbethe@yahoo.com</a>
I	273-0570	Booth	Ms. Robin	375 Stone Quarry Road	
I	257-1563	Bouldin	Mrs. Cynthia T.	343 Savage Farm Drive	
I	257-7770	Brazell	Ms. Karen	102 Highgate Place	
I		Bretlinger	Ms. Jane W.	301 Columbia Street	
H	257-0639	Brittain	Mr. Bruce	135 Warren Road	
H	257-0639	Brittain	Mr. Douglas	135 Warren Road	
H	257-0639	Brittain	Ms. Harriet B.	135 Warren Road	
I	273-6173	Brown	Ms. Doris	8 Oak Crest Road	<a href="mailto:dbrown011@twcnny.rr.com">dbrown011@twcnny.rr.com</a>
I	273-3009	Browne	Mr. Wayles	206 Eddy Street	

I	257-1240	Browning	Ms. Priscilla	1 Pleasant Grove Lane	
I	539-7316	Burlitch	Mrs. Katharine	2133 Ellis Hollow Road	<a href="mailto:klburlitch@frontiernet.net">klburlitch@frontiernet.net</a>
I	272-5769	Caldwell	Ms. Barbara	1624 Ellis Hollow Road	<a href="mailto:bcaldwel@twcnny.rr.com">bcaldwel@twcnny.rr.com</a>
I	257-2368	Canaday	Ms. Sara Beth	255 Fall Creek Drive	
I	272-7551	Coffman	Charlotte	26 Deerhaven Drive	<a href="mailto:cwc4@cornell.edu">cwc4@cornell.edu</a>
	(W) 255-2009				
I	257-5446	Colvin	Ms. Germaine	30 Horizon Drive	<a href="mailto:gcolvin111@aol.com">gcolvin111@aol.com</a>
I	257-1470	Conneman	Diane	250 Strawberry Hill Circle, #2	<a href="mailto:DYK2@cornell.edu">DYK2@cornell.edu</a>
Hon	272-1815	Corson	Mrs. Nellie	401 Savage Farm Drive	
I	257-3710	Corwin	Mrs. Maria	2808A N. Triphammer Rd	<a href="mailto:mdcorwin@twcnny.rr.com">mdcorwin@twcnny.rr.com</a>
H	273-1269	Daetsch	Mrs. Dorothy	1344 Danby Road	
H	273-1269	Daetsch	Mr. Willard	1344 Danby Road	<a href="mailto:daetsch@ithaca.edu">daetsch@ithaca.edu</a>
I	272-7078	Daniel	Ms. Helen	114 Northview Road	
I	257-6678	deProsse	Ms. Elizabeth	1007 Triphammer Road	<a href="mailto:deprosse@lightlink.com">deprosse@lightlink.com</a>
Hon	257-8376	Devereux	Ms. Eddie	602 Savage Farm Drive	
I	539-7688	Durant	Mrs. Katherine	15 Ogden Road	<a href="mailto:kdurant001@twcnny.rr.com">kdurant001@twcnny.rr.com</a>
H	277-0006	Duttweiler	Mrs. Linda	345 Coddington Road	<a href="mailto:ldutt@twcnny.rr.com">ldutt@twcnny.rr.com</a>
H	277-0006	Duttweiler	Mr. Michael	345 Coddington Road	<a href="mailto:mdutt@twcnny.rr.com">mdutt@twcnny.rr.com</a>
H	277-4404	Eisner	Ms. Maria	60 Hickory Circle	<a href="mailto:mle3@cornell.edu">mle3@cornell.edu</a>
H	277-4404	Eisner	Mr. Thomas	60 Hickory Circle	
I	272-0621	Elgie	Ms. Rebecca	409 Linn Street	<a href="mailto:healthylink@earthlink.net">healthylink@earthlink.net</a>
I	844-8184	Ferger	Ms. Martha	10 Union Street, #8	<a href="mailto:jhferger@pol.net">jhferger@pol.net</a>
				Dryden, New York 13053	
I	272-3421	Fireside	Bryna	202 Eastwood Avenue	
F	272-8888	Flaville	Richard	38 Sheraton Drive	"Friend of the LWV"
N	277-0019	Fleming	Ms. Donna	100 Valley Road	
I		Fleming	Mrs. Maralyn	205 The Parkway	
N	266-9428	Foote	Ms. Barbara	474 Savage Farm Drive	
I	257-9289	Gomer	Ms. Adelaide	513 Wyckoff	<a href="mailto:apgomer@aol.com">apgomer@aol.com</a>
I	277-3598	Gooding	Ms. Sunny	105 Eddy Street	<a href="mailto:shgooding@clarityconnect.com">shgooding@clarityconnect.com</a>
I	539-7751	Gosse	Mr. Bob	668 Ringwood Road	
I	272-3910	Gottfried	Ms. Sorel	1016 Cayuga Heights Road	<a href="mailto:sorel9@gmail.com">sorel9@gmail.com</a>
I	257-0035	Greenspan	Ms. Charlotte	429 Warren Road	<a href="mailto:JM63@cornell.edu">JM63@cornell.edu</a>
I	257-6631	Gries	Ms. Elaine	23 Spruce Lane	
Hon	273-6372	Grigorov	Ms. Carolyn	629 Coddington Road	
I	257-6017	Grubb	Ms. Sally	104 Midway Road	<a href="mailto:sallyrg@clarityconnect.com">sallyrg@clarityconnect.com</a>
F		Gyrisco	Mrs. Valerie	36 Twin Glens Road	"Friend of the LWV"
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				Brooktondale, New York 14817	
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I	227-3033	Lampert	Adrienne	116 Cascadilla Street	<a href="mailto:lampertcsw@aol.com">lampertcsw@aol.com</a>
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H	273-3457	Leopold	Carl	1203 East Shore Drive	
I	273-7746	Levin	Deborah S.	211 Strawberry Hill Circle, Unit 3	<a href="mailto:dlevin01@twcny.rr.com">dlevin01@twcny.rr.com</a>
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I	273-1423	McMillin	Sally	311 East Green Street, Apt. 2E	<a href="mailto:smac51@verizon.net">smac51@verizon.net</a>
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I	273-3378	Morse	Ms. Helen	40 Turkey Hill Road	<a href="mailto:nimrode@lightlink.com">nimrode@lightlink.com</a>
I	257-4342	Munschauer	Ms. Joyce R.	349 Savage Farm Drive	<a href="mailto:munsch@earthlink.net">munsch@earthlink.net</a>
I	266-0989	Myers	Ms. Margaret	700 Warren Road, #25-1F	<a href="mailto:mmyers@twcny.rr.com">mmyers@twcny.rr.com</a>
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				Trumansburg, New York 14886	
I	273-9410	Schwartz	Ms. Ruth	2 Fairway Drive	<a href="mailto:RS62@cornell.edu">RS62@cornell.edu</a>
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I	387-9252	Sellers	Dorothy	1687 Taughannock Blvd.	
				Trumansburg, New York 14886	
I	272-4748	Sharp	Kay	278 Black Oak Road	<a href="mailto:kshepherdqueen@yahoo.com">kshepherdqueen@yahoo.com</a>
	(W) 274-6200				
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I	273-1436	Silsbee	Mr. Robert	433 Savage Farm Drive	<a href="mailto:rhs1@cornell.edu">rhs1@cornell.edu</a>
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I	273-7605	Valenti	Ms. Aurora	104 Valley Road	

I	257-2165	VanBuren	Mary	106 Iroquois Place	
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I	539-3322	Wagner	Ms. Catherine	1665 Ellis Hollow Road	<a href="mailto:cmw18@cornell.edu">cmw18@cornell.edu</a>
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I	257-1894	Wyatt	Mrs. Alene	380 Savage Farm Drive	<a href="mailto:alene@lightlink.com">alene@lightlink.com</a>
I	257-8199	Yen	Kathleen	20 Cedar Lane	<a href="mailto:kyen@twcny.rr.com">kyen@twcny.rr.com</a>

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202-224-6542; Binghamton Office: 607-772-6792  
e-mail: senator@schumer.senate.gov web-site: schumer.senate.gov

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Michael Arcuri 327 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-3224  
202-225-3665; Cortland Office: 607-756-2470  
e-mail: send from web-site web-site: arcuri.house.gov

Maurice Hinchey 2431 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-6335; Ithaca Office: 607-273-1388; 123 S. Cayuga St. #201  
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