

One Small Step for Voting Rights

On June 20, 2016, the Westchester County Board of Legislators unanimously passed legislation that mandates the availability of voter registration forms in all County departments in addition to those where the County already was required to do so under federal and state law.

The Board of Legislators did so with the full support of the League of Women Voters of Westchester (LWVW), whose letter to the Board and the County Executive said, in part: “From its very inception, the mission of the League of Women Voters has been to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government, and it is our firm belief that the current legislation under consideration will not only make voter registration more accessible to prospective voters but will encourage their further desire to become part of the democratic process.” The LWVW had noted the abysmally low voter registration and turnout in the United States in general and in New York State specifically.

The LWVW would like to acknowledge the legislation’s sponsors (Legislators Ben Boykin, Mary Jane Shimsky, Catherine Borgia, and Lyndon Williams) and all the members of the Legislative Committees which reviewed it before sending it on to the Board of Legislators for a vote. Their transparent and exhaustive due diligence was key to its passage.

With the final enactment of this legislation, which awaits the County Executive’s signature, citizens may obtain voter registration forms in both English and Spanish at: the Westchester County Clerk’s Office; the Departments of Community Mental Health, Health, Social Services, Parks, Recreation & Conservation, Human Resources, Senior Program & Services, Probation, Public Works & Transportation, and Information Technology; the Human Rights Commission; the Taxi & Limousine Commission; the Youth Bureau; the Veterans Service Agency; and the Office for People with Disabilities.