LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

http://www.lwvtompkins.org

SPRING BULLETIN 2020 VOLUME I

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

VOTE411 UPDATE

VOTER SERVICES

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REJOICE THE VOTE

CENSUS 2020

Annual Meeting via Zoom May 14, 2020 at 7:00 pm

The agenda and budget for 2020-2021, slate of officers nominated to serve on the Board next year and information on how to connect to the meeting will be sent to the membership via e-mail.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government.

The league works to increase and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Any person 16 years and older, regardless of gender, may become a League member.

www.lwvtompkins.org
lwvtompkins@gmail.com
https://www.vote411.org/

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A message from your Co-Presidents
Submitted by Sally Grubb and Kay Wagner

Dear Friends in League,

Best wishes to you all – we hope you are all staying safe and well and coping with being physically isolated from one another while we deal with Covid-19. By the time you read this the situation we all face may well be very different from what it is now, with all of us in New York State restricted to our homes unless we fulfill essential roles within our community. All we can do is to give you a report on the last year and our hoped-for plans for the coming year.

We have had a year of change, saying goodbye to long time President Kay Sharp and moving forward with a great learning curve under our joint new leadership. With your support we plan on continuing this joint leadership next year.

One big change we have made was in response to the need to get information to our members and receive their feedback in a more timely manner whenever issues or items of interest arise. You will by now have received several emails labeled "LWV-TC Action Alert". We hope that all of you are reading these emails when you receive them and find them useful. Most importantly, please respond to the questions we ask.

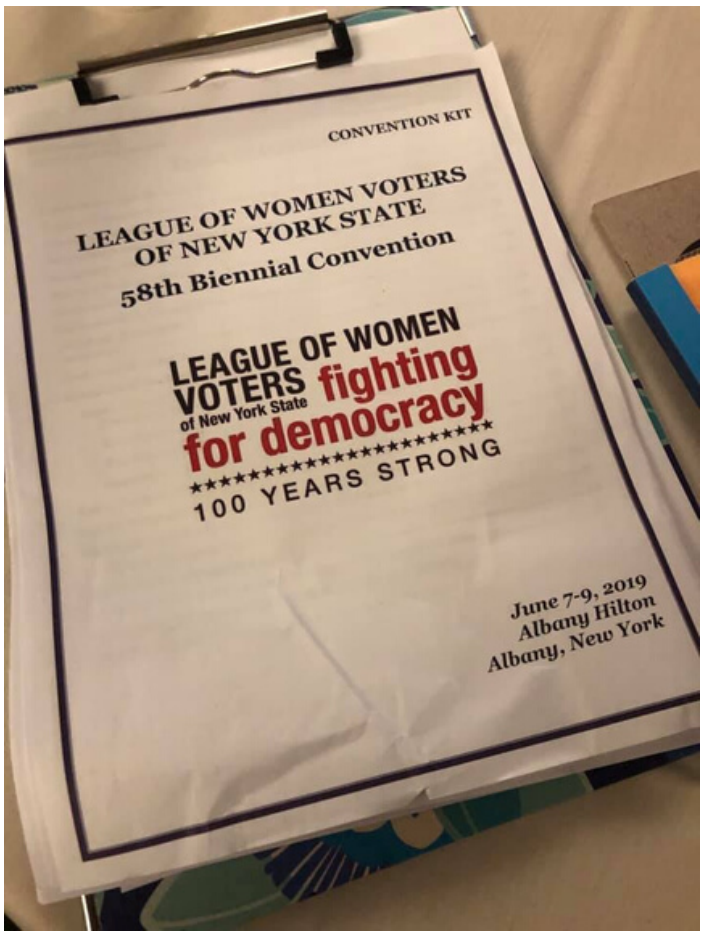
Because we are now using the Action Alerts to send you key information, we plan to publish and send out our bulletin quarterly – Spring (this one), Summer, Fall and Winter. Megan is doing a wonderful job of editing the bulletin and we want to thank her for all of her hard work.

We were pleased to hold our Annual Meeting on May 6, 2019 at the newly opened Tompkins Center for History and Culture with talks by Jody Butts, History Teacher at Susquehanna Valley High School, Conklin, and member of the LWV-NYS Social Studies Team and Julia Taylor, Eight Square Schoolhouse and Youth Education Director at the History Center. Four of us (Sally Grubb, Kay Wagner, Megan Nettleton and Ann Coyne) were privileged to join Kay Sharp at the LWVNY State Convention in Albany. There were many interesting talks and workshops and we returned with new thoughts and ideas concerning our local League.

While membership numbers have stayed level with new members making up for those we lost over the year, we have started working on strategies to recruit new younger members. The Program Committee discussed and initiated an open Book Reading Group, and popup meetings open to members and interested members of the community. The Reading Group proved most successful and we hope to continue when life returns to normal.

On August 26, we celebrated Women's Equality Day, marking the approval of the Nineteenth Amendment. Members of Planned Parenthood and the AAUW joined us on The Commons to celebrate 99 years of Women's right to vote with exhibits about the work of our three organizations and discussing all that still needs to be done ensuring equality for all. We walked the Commons and talked to people about our work as well as registering people to vote and recruiting new members.

We held a members' meeting on September 23 to which the community was also invited. This meeting was planned as a time for members to get together, learn more about our different committees and activities and share ideas, as well as voting on an increase in our membership dues necessitated by an increase in State dues. Again, we recruited new members.





Other successful events include programs organized by our Natural Resources Committee and Health Committee. Our members meeting on November 11 was co-sponsored by Democracy Ranking Project on the topic "Do We Have a Democracy Crisis? And what should be do about it?"

2020 ushered in our plans for celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment as well as the Founding of the NY League and our own League in Tompkins County, but those plans have been put on hold.

It was with great regret we decided to cancel our annual Soup and Bread Lunch, usually a great get-together for members and supporters. And now it is certain we will have to cancel our Dinner and Annual Meeting, but as of today we intend to hold a virtual Annual Meeting via Zoom. Information about participating in thie meeting will be available shortly.

Using our new Action Alert email, we will be letting you know what we plan to do, including how members will vote on the budget for 2020-21, next year's programming and the new slate of Board Officers.

We are still working on plans for the Exhibit which will be on display in the Atrium Tower at the Tompkins Center for History and Culture later this year. Our latest Action Letter describes what we are doing and asks for your help and ideas. We hope all of you can contribute your thoughts and knowledge to this wonderful project.

Many of us are hoping that once this crisis is over, whenever that might be, we will hold a special lunch or dinner to celebrate.

We close now wishing that you all stay safe and stay well, and that you stay connected with each other and all that the League continues to do.

Kay Wagner and Sally Grubb

VOTE411 is a service of the League of Women Voters and aims to provide all the information one needs to vote in local, state and national elections. It provides information about all elections, positions to be filled and candidates running.

VOTE411.org is an online voter guide provided as a nonpartisan community service by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF).

Visit VOTE411.ORG to find candidate contact information and their responses to questions, in addition to election and voting information.

Election Overview trifold flyers, important calendar dates, and local Voter Guides for Village and General Elections are also posted on our local League website, LWVTOMPKINS.ORG as well as links to VOTE411, the Board of Elections, and the state League.

The national, state and local Leagues are working with the Board of Elections to assist in providing updated voting information as it becomes available due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please watch our website LWVTOMPKINS.ORG for 2020 voting updates as they become available (e.g. when, where or how to vote, deadlines, etc.)

The most recent changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic were the 2020 Village Elections and School Board Elections being postponed. They are yet to be rescheduled. Contact the Tompkins County Board of Elections at 607-274-5522 with questions. Tompkins County Absentee Ballot Applications are available on the Tompkins County Board of Elections website home page, http://tompkinscountyny.gov/boe and are posted on our website at http://www.lwvtompkins.org/voting.html

Important dates which are accurate as of going to press:

Primaries June 23, 2020
Early Voting: June 13- June 21
Deadline for Voter Registration
May 29 in person and postmarked
Application for Absentee Ballot
June 16 postmarked; June 22 in person
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General Election: November 3, 2020
Early Voting October: 24 - November 1
Deadline for Voter Registration
October 9 in person and postmarked
Application for Absentee Ballot
October 27 postmarked; November 2 in person text

Voter Services Annual Report
Submitted by Sally Grubb

This has been a difficult year for Voter Services because of the resignation of Mandy Qualls due to work commitments. It made us realize the importance of having two co-directors because of the amount of work required organizing all our League needs to do and would like to do promoting voter registration and educating and community about the importance of voting. Mandy however gave us a good start to the year with many events already planned and has agreed to continue her involvement as a Forum Moderator and Trainer.

I agreed to take on the role on an interim basis and will continue to do so until two new co-voter services directors are found. I was, however, supported by several members who stepped forward to fill key roles. We have now established Voter Services liaisons with Cornell Votes, Pam Tolbert, Ithaca College, Lucia Sciore, TC3, Connie Engman, and Naturalization Ceremonies, Sheila Stone and Kathy Hawkins. We have members working with community organizations and spearheading specific voter registration drives.

On August 26 we held a very successful Women's Equality Day event on the Commons in conjunction with AAUW and Planned Parenthood. Voter registration drives were held during Porch Fest, Apple Harvest, Flu clinics on Cornell Campus and for a week at TC3. We mounted a successful two weeks exhibit at the Public Library, with staffing by League members on February 14 for LWV Action Day as well as Naturalization Ceremonies in November and February.We held one Candidate Forum for the Town of Caroline on October 22.

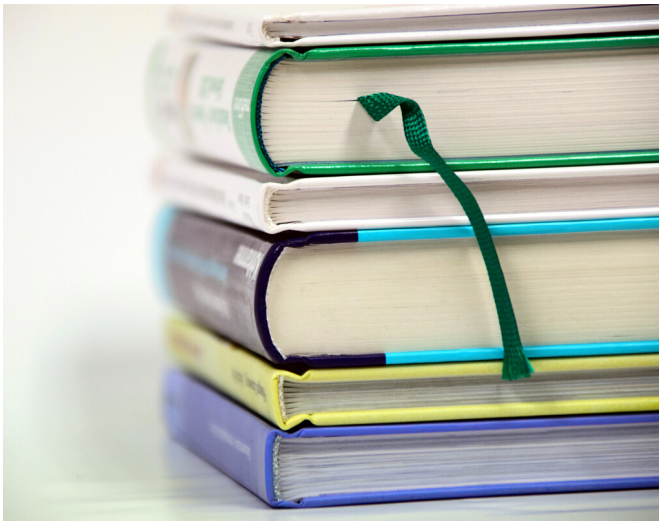
The rest of our plans for 2019-20 have been put on hold due to the Coronavirus. Activities will start again as soon the Pandemic is over. In the meantime, anything we do will be through our website and Facebook page and at online meetings. We do however intend to continue working with the History Committee on the development of an Exhibit celebrating 100 year anniversary of the LWV in Tompkins County which will be displayed at the Tompkins Center for History & Culture later this year. We also continue our work with the County Census Committee.

Whilst our participation in VOTE411 comes under the umbrella of Voter Services, this has been wonderfully managed by Kathy Yen supported by Nancy Skipper. See their report earlier in this bulletin. They have reported separately. At the present time their zeal keeping VOTE411 and our website up to date with information regarding different and changing voting dates. voting dates is invaluable and we are very grateful to them.

We look forward to an uncertain 2020-2021, but will strive to stay well, active and connected through the League.

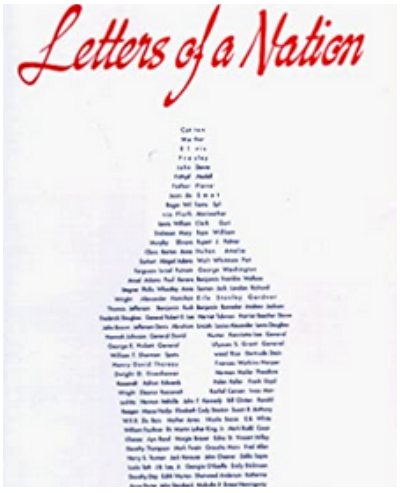
Book Club

led by members of the LWV-TC



Our next book is a collection of letters to America. For readers who enjoy reading a wide variety of letters, this book will prove satisfying. Carroll, executive director of the American Poetry and Literacy Project, has selected and provided superior brief i ntroductions for more than 200 historical and personal letters, arranged in ten categories.

The variety is extraordinary. For example, we read Bill Clinton's 1969 draft letter and Elvis Presley's admiring 1970 note to Richard Nixon; the famous, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus" letter and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."



Letters of a Nation: A Collection of Extraordinary American Letters by Andrew Carroll
ISBN-10: 1568361963
ISBN-13: 978-1568361963

https://www.amazon.com/Letters-Nation-Collection-Extraordinary-American/dp/1568361963

Dates to be determined.

Natural Resources Annual Report
Submitted by Kay Wagner



The year got off to a wonderful start. On Aril 27, 2019, the LWV-TC co-sponsored the Climate Wise Garden Fair. There were over 30 exhibiters and speakers and 366 people attended the event. 350 trees were given away, with the remaining trees given to the City arborist. The LWV-TC had planned to co-sponsor the Climate Wise Garden Fair on April 6, 2020. Unfortunately, the fair has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The LWVNY convention was held in June 2019. At the convention the state committee on Agriculture, Energy and the Environment, chaired by Beth Radow, held a workshop on food waste. The program included a talk by a representative from the NYS DEC who explained new legislation requiring large food producers to take steps to avoid food waste and to compost what cannot be used. Kay gave a brief talk on the subject of carbon farming and described the relevant programs our local League sponsored or co-sponsored last year.

On August 14, 2019, some members of our committee attended a public hearing held by the NYS Public Service Commission (PSC). The hearing was held in response to the request by NYSEG to increase its delivery charges for both electricity and gas. Speakers from the audience were almost unanimous in calling for no new infrastructure for natural gas. Most of the comments also stressed the importance of requiring NYSEG to upgrade the electric grid with more substations and appropriate connections so that developers can bring solar and wind farms on line. There were also many calls for subsidies for heat pumps since NYSEG is the only utility in the state not already offering them.

On September 10, 2019, LWV-TC co-sponsored a presentation of the movie “Dirt Rich” at Cinemapolis. We want to thank Mothers Out Front for organizing the event. There was a large audience - over 200 people with many of us happily sitting on the stairs even through a power outage. The movie was filmed at several places around the globe and showed how farmers in those areas use regenerative farming and other techniques to enrich the soil while also sequestering carbon and reducing their dependence on both pesticides and industrial fertilizers.

On October 17, 2019, our League co-sponsored a water forum organized by Environmental Advocates of New York. Cayuga Lake Watershed Network was the other co-sponsor and Hilary Lambert, the Steward of that organization, was one of the speakers. Kay had a chance to talk briefly about the LWV-TC and what we do. Barbara Lifton spoke about new and proposed NewYork State legislation that deals with environmental issues and environmental justice. A follow-up meeting was held by Environmental Advocates on February 6, 2020.

Our February 24, 2020, program "Climate Crisis is Serious … Are We?" was a great success. Over 100 people attended, filling the Borg Warner Room.

Art Weaver, head of the local chapter of Extinction Rebellion, gave a very nice talk that began with scientific data and then discussed the importance of being out there protesting.

Nick Goldsmith, Sustainability Coordinator for the City and Town of Ithaca, described the city's green new deal and green building policy. He outlined the goals and said that many details need to be filled in. The current green building policy only covers new construction. The next, and much harder, step is to figure out how to work on existing homes and buildings to dramatically reduce the greenhouse gas emissions.

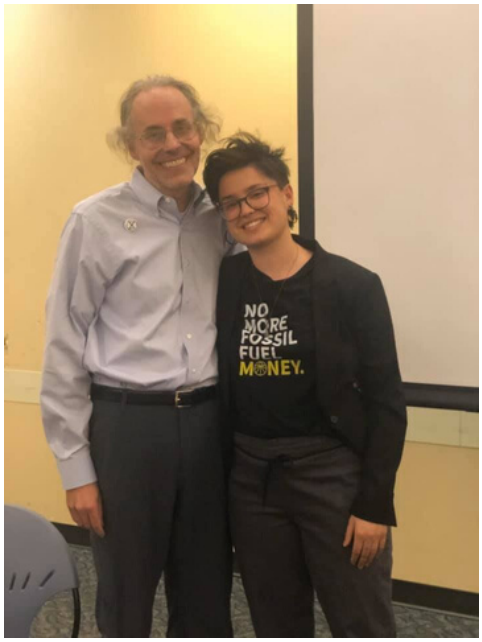
After Nick spoke, Cheyenne Carter and Marisa Lansing of the local chapter of the Sunrise Movement gave a wonderful talk about their goals and what they are doing. Their youthful enthusiasm and positive outlook was great. They even got the audience to stand up and sing.

Our thanks to Susan Multer for preparing a half page handout for our program. The handout briefly explained the NYS hazardous waste bill which needs to be passed this spring. (LWVNY supports the bill.) The handout contained contact information for the local assembly and senate representatives from Tompkins County.

As we look ahead to next year our committee plans to continue learning more about climate change and how we should respond to this crisis. We also are deeply concerned about the issue of environmental justice and want to learn more about this important topic.

When we think about "environmental justice" two different aspects come to mind. First, in looking around the country we see that sites of current and potential pollution are often located in areas in which the residents have little political power and/or have low levels of income.

As we begin to move towards a future with more renewable energy resources a second issue comes to the front, namely, who will pay for the needed upgrades of the grid and the continuing delivery costs. Will it be mainly those who cannot afford to install solar panels and those who live in apartments? As we continue to grapple with these important issues we hope more of our members will join our committee and contribute their thoughts and ideas.



Students Inside Albany Report
Submitted by Megan Nettleton



The League of Women Voters of Tompkins County is honored to have Joshua Stone be our representative for the Students Inside Albany Program. Sadly, the conference has been canceled due to Covid-19.

A senior from the Ithaca City School District, Joshua was highly recommended by the Ithaca City School District Superintendent.

Joshua has excelled in his classes as he has received high marks from his teachers and peers. He is recognized as a school leader due to hisl evel of engagement and talents. Joshua participated in multiple school clubs and performances. He was a member of Ithaca High School's first student show selection committee, a cast member of the high school musical, Link Crew, and the active Social Justice Week planning committee.

Specifically, Joshua is one of 4 student representatives to the Board of Education. Student representatives for the Board of Education attend the Board's bi-weekly meetings, sit at the table with the Board, and participate in discussions about policy, budget, and all other district governance topics. Along with being a leader in our school community, Joshua has served as a valuable contributor to his community outside of school as well. Joshua is an exceptional contributor to our local media, writing for the Ithaca Voice and hosting at WRFI Community Radio.

Nominating Committee Report
Submitted by Ann Warde

The Nominating Committee proposes the following slate of officers

The Membership will be asked to vote on the positions in bold:

Co-President Kay Wagner (2-year term 2020-2022)

(Co-President Sally Grubb (completing 2-year term 2019-2021))
(Membership Chair + 1st Vice President Lory Saltzman (completing 2-year term 2019-2021))
(Treasurer Ann Coyne (completing 2-year term 2019-2021))

Secretary – Meeting Minutes only Nancy Skipper (1-year term 2020-2021)
The other responsibilities of the Secretary will be moved to the two co-Presidents.

Co-Program Chair + co 2nd Vice President Megan Nettleton (2-year term 2020-2022)
Co-Program Chair + co 2nd Vice President Ann Warde (2-year term 2020-2022)

1st Co-Voter Services Chair Sally Grubb (continuing 2nd year of 2-year term 2020-2021)
2nd Co-Voter Services Chair Seeking a Nomination (2-year term 2020-2022)

Director at Large Charlotte Coffman
Director at Large Doris Thurber

The nominations for LWVTC Board of Directors for year 2020-2021 will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in May (date to be confirmed). Positions in parentheses are continuing, so they will not be voted on this year

Committee Chairs
Health: Ann Coyne
Natural Resources: Kay Wagner
History : Flo Smith
Youth including Students Inside Albany: Megan Nettleton
Bulletin Editor & PR: Megan Nettleton

non-board member voter services project leader: VOTE411 Kathleen Yen

Membership Report
Submitted by Lory Saltzman

There are 10 Honorary active members and 1 Honorary additional family membership. Our number of Honorary members is diminished, as we remain saddened by the death of Honorary member Rose Bethe. We are also saddened by the death of long time Active member Bob Silsbee. We also miss Kay Sharp, long time League Chair, moved to retirement in Pennsylvania.

Currently we have 47 active individual members, including 7 new individual members and 2 new Student members.We have 8 Additional Family members (not including our Honorary Family member noted above.)

Altogether our League has 55 active members

Thanks must go out to those who do the most to encourage new members to join our League, the folks who keep the League running smoothly in general, those who are responsible for the interesting informative public programs, and those who engage in less formal, more social, but equally informative on-going activities on a regular basis. We owe these folks a deep debt of gratitude!

For all of us, in order to encourage new members when talking to folks about League work we have been offering to send them a membership form. A better idea may be to always carry one and simply hand it to them.

Writing letters and posts on social media using League positions and acknowledging them is always good for getting our work known. It shows that we do even more than registering voters and running forums. We can influence what elections are about, and help make sure they are fair. To be sure that requires time, and that's in short supply at the moment.

At the present time there is much uncertainty but let us strive to do what we can to carry the growth of our League onward.

HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT
SUBMITTED BY ANN COYNE

The Health Committee sponsored an educational meeting on various forms of Health Care financing on February 3, 2020. The meeting was held at Kendal with about 75 people in attendance. Dr. Brian Coyne, Vice President for Federal Affairs for Magellan Health and Susan Beckley, spokesperson for the NY Health Act, were the speakers.

Dr. Coyne outlined the various health care financing bills that are active in the Congress, from Medicare for All to a public option for the Affordable Care Act. Ms. Beckley discussed the details of the NY Health Act, which is a state-based Medicare for all type program, which has passed the NYS Assembly every year from 2015-2018, but has yet to get out of the Senate Health Committee for a floor vote. There were many questions from the audience, and the discussion involved the best way to achieve universal
coverage for all people.

The NYS Health Care Act envisions a totally public state run system without any private health care corporate involvement. Dr. Coyne pointed out the difficulty of getting passage at the federal level of any totally public system and suggested a step-wise approach beginning with a public option to the ACA, which, if successful, could lead to more and more people each year selecting the public option and ending with a totally public system through patient choice as opposed to federal requirement.

The committee intends to continue its interest in health care policy and focus particularly on health care issues related to children.



Rejoice the Vote

We were extremely pleased when Sheila Stone introduced us to the new vibrant community group Rejoice the Vote and are grateful to her for introducing us to Jeff Furman and agreeing to coordinate a co-sponsored program. We are very disappointed that the proposed program on April 2 had to be cancelled.

We hope that Sheila and Jeff will agree to hold a similar program later in the year. In the meantime we highly recommend you check out their website at http://www.rejoicethevote.org to learn more.

Rejoice the Vote" aims to strengthen democracy by changing the culture of voting from a chore to a joyful celebration. "Rejoice the Vote" has developed a three pronged approach which includes:

1. Honoring the past by identifying the "Voting Vanguards", those who dedicated their lives to voting rights.

2. Celebrating the present by enrolling cities throughout the US in "The Votingest City Challenge", a light-hearted competition to see which city gets the most eligible voters to the polls.

3. Looking toward the future with "By a Show of Hands" which promotes early education and participation in school-based elections from elementary to high school.



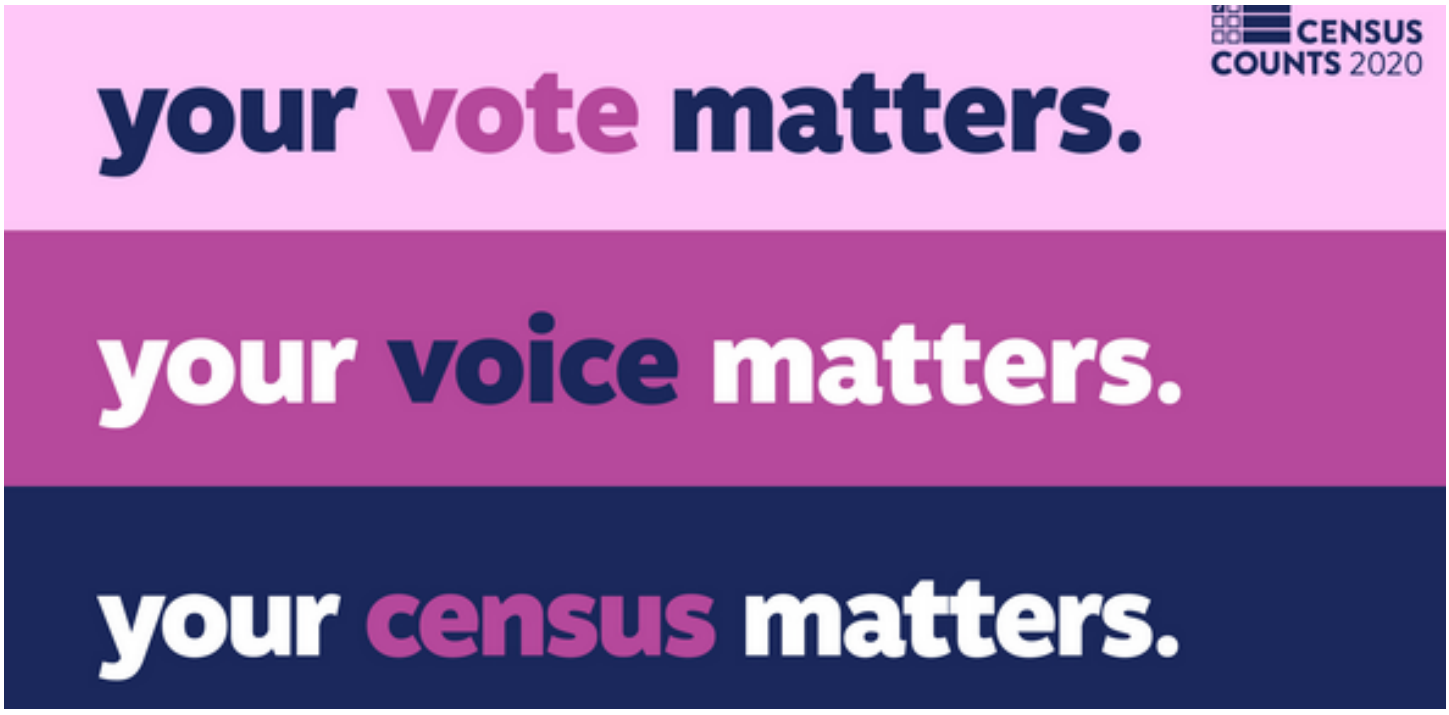
Census 2020

In 2020, the Census Bureau is providing three modes of response: through the internet, over the phone, or by returning a paper questionnaire. All these methods are considered safe in terms of protecting yourself and loved ones against COVID-19. It's not about 'if' we fill out the Census form, but about 'how'.

Will you fill out the 2020 Census today? It takes about five minutes and is safe to do right from your couch or favorite chair at 2020Census.gov.

You're not doing this alone. Already, over eleven million households have responded.

Completing the census is about collecting the necessary information to determine funding for our community needs. Census data is used to distribute billions of dollars in funding that goes to ensure that public safety, health facilities, businesses, and communities have the resources they need to take care of their communities.



The League of Women Voters of Tompkins County publishes this bulletin four times a year.

Previous bulletins can be found on our website at
http://www.lwvtompkins.org/bulletins.html

For information about our league go to
http://www.lwvtompkins.org/

Reach us by email at
lwvtompkins@gmail.com

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