

Issues & Advocacy Committee Members Meet with LaLota, Travel to Albany to Lobby for Environmental Proposals, Prison Reform

He has avoided town halls, but U.S. Rep. Nick LaLota met with members of the Huntington League in February and took questions about a full range of members' concerns. These included the SAVE Act, the lack of Congressional oversight, the Constitutional Crisis, the immigrant crisis, affordable housing health care, and more. The visit, according to Isabelle Pullis, was confrontational but ended cordially.

Meanwhile, Barbara Kurek and Jayette Lansbury traveled to Albany for face-to-face lobbying. Barbara worked with members of Beyond Plastics to push for the Plastics Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA). Assembly member Rebecca Kassay, a cosponsor, agreed to ask Speaker Heastie to bring the bill to the floor for a vote this session. Barbara also met with a staffer of Senator Martinez who has introduced an opposing, weaker bill favored by the plastic and chemical industries. The PRRIA is a better bill to limit plastic production and eliminates 17 toxic chemicals currently used in plastic production. She also lobbied Senator Anthony Palumbo, who originally supported the bill, but had removed his support.

Jayette worked with Communities Not Cages to advocate for parole justice including passage of the Second Look Act, the Earned Time Act and the Marvin Mayfield Act. Jayette also met with legislators about initiatives for people facing mental health issues, along with representatives of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the Alliance for Rights and Recovery. Both organizations are asking for a 2.7% increase in the State budget to cover mental health providers, housing, and expansion of social clubhouses. They are also fighting for passage of Daniel's Law to address how law enforcement treats people having mental health crises, and the Forensic Rehabilitation Act to address individuals being held indefinitely following a plea of "not responsible by reason of mental disease or defect."

Other committee efforts included:

- o On Feb. 17, Newsday printed Frances Whittelsey's article on the constitutional crisis and the League's response, the Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative. Every LWV chapter in Nassau & Suffolk Counties signed on in support of the article.
- o A showing of the film Undocumented is scheduled for 3/21 at 2pm at the Cinema Arts Center. The Huntington League is a co-sponsor of this event which will incorporate a panel discussion with panelists Patricia Shih (producer), Harold Fernandez MD (subject of film), and a legal representative from CARECEN immigrant rights organization. A book signing and reception in the Sky Room will follow.
- o The Huntington League is partnering with SEIU 1199, NAACP, 100 Black Women, and the Board of Elections to organize a voting machine demonstration and voter education and registration by LWV on 3/19 at 6pm at Dominican Village in Amityville.

- o LWV Huntington held a webinar in conjunction with SEIU/1199 Health Education Project to explain the effects of the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill on Medicare, Medicaid, and health care in general. Panelists from Metro NY Health Care for All, Health & Welfare Council of Long Island, and Grace Group Medicare Consultants discussed the impact on health insurance premiums, ACA subsidies, and health care employment. The webinar ended with action items including: calling U.S. representatives to urge them to extend ACA subsidies; urging representatives to the state legislature to pass the NY Health Care Act; and supporting organizations like Planned Parenthood.

Looking forward, the Huntington League will be participating in No Kings 3, the protest set for March 28. The LWV US will again serve as an official partner for the protests, with additional actions anticipated later in the year.

Information about protest locations will be shared with all members.

And, meetings with all town, county and state elected officials are being organized and are expected to take place by the end of March.