



# Free New York

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The Official Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of New York

May 2026

## PETITIONING, BALLOT ACCESS, AND THE ROAD AHEAD

by Andrew Kolstee  
LPNY Secretary

You may be wondering why the Libertarian Party of New York has been silent through the petitioning period this year. This was intentional, and once this year's process is over in early June, we will elaborate on the decision to be silent, and on the decisions of the State Committee.

The ballot access situation in New York remains extremely difficult. The current requirements continue to place a heavy burden on independent and third-party candidates, especially organizations made up primarily of volunteers. These challenges force us to make hard decisions about where to focus our time and resources.

The Executive Committee has discussed several ideas for moving the Libertarian Party of New York in a different direction. We know what has worked, we know what has not worked, and we recognize that continuing to operate the same way is not sustainable under the current system.

We are currently working on a campaign that will be announced shortly. This effort is intended to help move the party forward while recognizing the practical limitations we face as a volunteer organization.

We also want to hear from members. If you have particular ideas, issues, or proposals that you believe the party should discuss, please contact us. This process will not be easy, but we appreciate everyone's patience as we navigate the next steps.

### State/National Conventions

Plans for the 2026 LPNY State Convention are underway. This will be the gathering where the newly elected 2026-2028 State Committee convenes to elect the Executive Committee. Additional information will be sent out shortly. Save the Date for October 24, 2026 in Mount Kisco, New York.

The June newsletter will also include a recap on the 2026 National Convention.

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### Ballot Access Bills

There are still no updates on the Senate bill, S01870, or Assembly bill, A02724, which would reduce the thresholds for independent and third-party ballot access. Both remain in committee.

Please contact your State Senator and Assemblymember to express your support for these critical reforms. Every voice matters in advancing fair ballot access for all New Yorkers.

# COUNTY AFFILIATE NEWS

## CHAUTAUQUA

### NEXT MEETING:

Tues., June 9, 2026 @ 6:00 PM  
at 14 Main  
14 Main Street,  
Bemus Point, NY  
and on Zoom  
(second Tuesdays)

### CONTACT:

**Andrew Kolstee, Chair**  
akolstee@lpny.org

### LEARN MORE:

www.chautauquaLP.org  
fb.com/chautauquaLP

## CHEMUNG

### CONTACT:

**Nick Grasso, Chair**  
ngrasso89@yahoo.com

### LEARN MORE:

lpchemung.org

## COLUMBIA

### NEXT MEETING:

Wed., June 17, 2026 @ 7 PM  
Google Meet  
(third Wednesdays)

### CONTACT:

**Scott Hoskins, Chair**  
scottdhoskins@gmail.com

## DUTCHESS

### NEXT MEETING:

Sat., June 20, 2026 @ 5 PM  
Village Restaurant  
& Pancake Factory  
1540 Route 44, Pleasant Valley  
(3rd Saturdays)

### CONTACT:

**Robert Cocomello, Chair**  
**Catrina Rocco, Vice-Chair**  
info@dutchesscountylp.org

### LEARN MORE:

dutchesscountylp.org

## ERIE

### CONTACT:

**Duane Whitmer, Chair**  
chairman@eriecountylp.org

## KINGS (BROOKLYN)

### NEXT MEETING:

Tues., June 16, 2026 at 3 PM  
@ Fourth Avenue Pub  
76 4th Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11217  
(3rd Tuesdays)

### CONTACT:

**Christopher Skelly, Chair**  
cskelly@lpny.org

## MADISON

### CONTACT:

**Mark Braiman, Chair**  
mbraiman@lpny.org

## MONROE

### NEXT MEETING:

Thurs., June 4, 2026 @ 7 PM  
(first Thursdays)  
Contact us for the link.

### CONTACT:

**Steve Becker, Chair**  
drsbecker@aol.com

### LEARN MORE:

monroecountylp.org  
Ask about the Google Group  
and social meetings

## NASSAU

### NEXT MEETING:

Thurs., June 11, 2026 at 7 PM  
@ Landmark Diner  
(2nd Thursdays)

### CONTACT:

**Jon Gunther,**  
**Executive Committee Chair**  
jonguntherlibertarian@gmail.com

**Blay Tarnoff,**  
**County Committee Chair**  
LPNY@eblay.com

## NEW YORK (MANHATTAN)

### CONTACT:

**Chance Haywood, Chair**  
chaywood@lpny.org

## ONEIDA

### CONTACT:

**Keith Redhead, Chair**  
kredhead@lpny.org

## ONONDAGA

**NEXT MEETING:**

Wed., June 17, 2026 at 6:30 PM  
Liverpool Public Library  
(3rd Wednesdays)

**CONTACT:**

**Rachel Becker, Chair**  
reb4128@rit.edu  
onondagacountylp@gmail.com

## ONTARIO

**CONTACT:**

**Nathan Dingey,**  
**Acting County Chair**

## ORANGE

**NEXT MEETING:**

Held 4th Thursdays. Location  
varies. Contact us for details.

**CONTACT:**

**Juan Ayala, Chair**  
livefree@juanrayala.com

## QUEENS

**NEXT MEETING:**

Sat., June 13, 2026 at 12 PM  
Stamatis Greek  
and Mediterranean Restaurant  
29-09 23rd Ave., Astoria  
(2nd Saturdays)

**CONTACT:**

**Francisco Olvera, Chair**  
folvera@lpny.org

## RENSSELAER

**NEXT MEETING:**

Wed., June 3, 2026 at 6:30 PM  
Alexis Diner, North Greenbush  
(1st Wednesdays)

**CONTACT:**

**Jennifer O'Connor,**  
**Acting County Chair**  
joconnor@lpny.org

## RICHMOND (STATEN ISLAND)

**NEXT MEETING:**

Thurs., June 18, 2026 @ 7 PM  
@ Coffee and Collectibles  
(3rd Thursdays)

**CONTACT:**

**Susan Overeem Cummings,**  
**Chair**  
susanovereem@gmail.com

## SARATOGA

**CONTACT:**

**Naz Garabedien, Chair**  
nazareth.garabedian  
@lawsonproducts.com

## SCHOHARIE

**CONTACT:**

**Mason Hovack,**  
**Acting County Chair**

## SUFFOLK

**NEXT MEETING:**

TBD  
Panera Bread, Deer Park  
(usually 4th Thursdays)

**CONTACT:**

**Robert Schuon, Chair**  
rschuon@mindspring.com

## ULSTER

**NEXT MEETING:**

Mon., June 8, 2026 at 6:30 PM  
Hickory BBQ, Kingston, NY  
(second Mondays)

**CONTACT:**

**Sam Kniffen, Chair**  
samkniffen01@gmail.com

**LEARN MORE:**

[www.UlsterLP.org](http://www.UlsterLP.org)

## WAYNE

**MONTHLY SOCIAL:**

Sat., June 27, 2026 at 10 AM  
Yellow Mills Diner  
2534 NY-31, Palmyra, NY 14522  
(last Saturdays)

**CONTACT:**

**Jim Dayton, Chair**  
jdayton@lpny.org

**LEARN MORE:**

[lpwaynecounty.org](http://lpwaynecounty.org)

## WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM

**NEXT MEETING:**

TBD

**CONTACT:**

**Rajib Maitra, Chair**  
rajib.maitra1@gmail.com

# LPNY DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	COMMITTEE CHAIRS	
<p><b>Duane Whitmer</b> Chair  <b>Daniel Castello</b> Vice Chair  <b>Andrew Kolstee</b> Secretary  <b>Chance Haywood</b> Treasurer  <b>Christopher Skelly</b> Communications Director  <b>Mark Axinn</b> Fundraising Director  <b>Justin Carman</b> IT Director  <b>Richard Purtell</b> Legislative Affairs Director  <b>Pietro Geraci</b> Outreach Director  <b>Paul Grindle</b> Political Director  <b>Catrina Rocco</b> Volunteer Director</p>	<p><b>Daniel Castello</b>  Platform Committee Chair  <b>Andrew Kolstee</b>  Rules Committee Chair  <b>Daniel Castello</b>  Strategic Planning Committee Chair  <b>Catrina Rocco</b>  Conventions Oversight Committee Chair</p>	
STATE COMMITTEE		
<p><b>Mark Axinn</b> (JD1)  <b>Morry Davis</b> (JD1)  <b>Paul Grindle</b> (JD2)  <b>Gary Popkin</b> (JD2)  <b>Evan Lebrecht</b> (JD3)  <b>Justin Carman</b> (JD3)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD4)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD4)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD4)  <b>Daniel Castello</b> (JD5)  <b>James Fitch</b> (JD5)  <b>E. Rose Leatherman</b> (JD5)  <b>Mark Braiman</b> (JD6)  <b>Charles Dorgan</b> (JD6)  <b>Samuel Hordeski</b> (JD6)  <b>Steven Becker</b> (JD7)  <b>Justin Pelletier</b> (JD7)  <b>Sean Phelan</b> (JD7)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD7)  <b>Maura Botsford</b> (JD8)</p>	<p><b>Andrew Kolstee</b> (JD8)  <b>Wendi Szabo</b> (JD8)  <b>Duane Whitmer</b> (JD8)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD8)  <b>Pietro Geraci</b> (JD9)  <b>Catrina Rocco</b> (JD9)  <b>William Schmidt</b> (JD9)  <b>Jonathan Gunther</b> (JD10)  <b>Vincent O'Neill</b> (JD10)  <b>Christian Padgett</b> (JD10)  <b>Robert Schuon</b> (JD10)  <b>Blay Tarnoff</b> (JD10)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD10)  <b>Irwin Mark Weinblatt</b> (JD11)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD11)  <i>Vacant</i> (JD12)  <b>Susan Overeem-Cummings</b> (JD13)  <b>Chance Haywood</b> (ex-officio)  <b>Richard Purtell</b> (ex-officio)  <b>Christopher Skelly</b> (ex-officio)</p>	
<a href="mailto:info@lpny.org">info@lpny.org</a>	<a href="http://www.LPNY.org">www.LPNY.org</a>	<b>866-336-3120</b>