Free New York

Vol. 55, No. 9 | *The Official Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of New York* | September 2026

# NY LIBERTARIANS URGE VOTERS TO WRITE-IN NONE OF THE ABOVE FOR GOVERNOR, REJECT HOCHUL AND BLAKEMAN

NOVEMBER 3, 2026 • NEW YORK

## VOTE NOTA

### NONE OF THE ABOVE FOR GOVERNOR

Send a clear message to Albany. When the major parties fail to represent us, we write in 'None of the Above'. Demanding real political choice, systemic ballot reform, and a government accountable to the people.

ALBANY, N.Y. — For the second consecutive gubernatorial election, New York voters will face a general election ballot featuring only two candidates for governor, despite five political party lines. In response, the Libertarian Party of New York is calling for a statewide "None of the Above" (VOTE NOTA) write-in protest in the November 3 election, challenging both the lack of competition and the state's restrictive ballot-access laws.

Gov. Kathy Hochul appears on the Democratic and Working Families lines, while Republican challenger Bruce Blakeman appears on the Republican, Conservative, and Vote Affordable lines. Neither faced a contested gubernatorial primary, leaving voters in both major parties without an opportunity to choose between competing nominees.

Through its VOTE NOTA campaign, the party is urging New Yorkers dissatisfied with both candidates to use the gubernatorial write-in space to express that dissatisfaction rather than support either major-party nominee or stay home. LPNY describes the effort as a protest against a system in which five ballot lines offer only two choices, with the aim of demonstrating opposition to the political status quo and reducing the share of voter support received by the two major-party candidates.

"New Yorkers deserve to choose a governor, not settle for whoever survives the barriers to getting on the ballot," said Duane Whitmer, Chair of the Libertarian Party of New York. "If no one on that ballot cares about you, no one supports you, and no one deserves your vote, you should be able to say so. That's what our NOTA campaign is about.

**(continued on page 2)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vote NOTA ..... 1-2
2026 LPNY Convention ..... 3
Blay Tarnoff for Congress ..... 4
County Affiliates ..... 6-7
LPNY Directory ..... 8

(continued from page 1)

Politicians aren't entitled to your support. They should have to earn it."

In 2018, the Libertarian Party of New York earned official ballot access for the first time, only to lose it after lawmakers changed election rules in the 2020 state budget, requiring 45,000 petition signatures to place a candidate on the ballot and the greater of 130,000 votes or 2 percent to maintain party status. The new thresholds effectively shut out emerging political parties. But while Albany can keep alternatives off the printed ballot, it cannot prevent New Yorkers from expressing their rejection of both candidates through a write-in vote.

"We are done playing a game whose rules were rewritten to make sure we lose before the first vote is cast," Skelly said. "If Albany wants a two-party state, it can have one, and it can own the turnout, the cynicism, and the legitimacy crisis that comes with it. We will not staff their stage."

The LPNY also advocates ballot-access reform through Senate bill S01870 and Assembly bill A02724, which would restore pre-2020 thresholds of 15,000 petition signatures to appear on the ballot and 50,000 votes to qualify for party status, opening the door to greater political competition and more choices for New Yorkers.

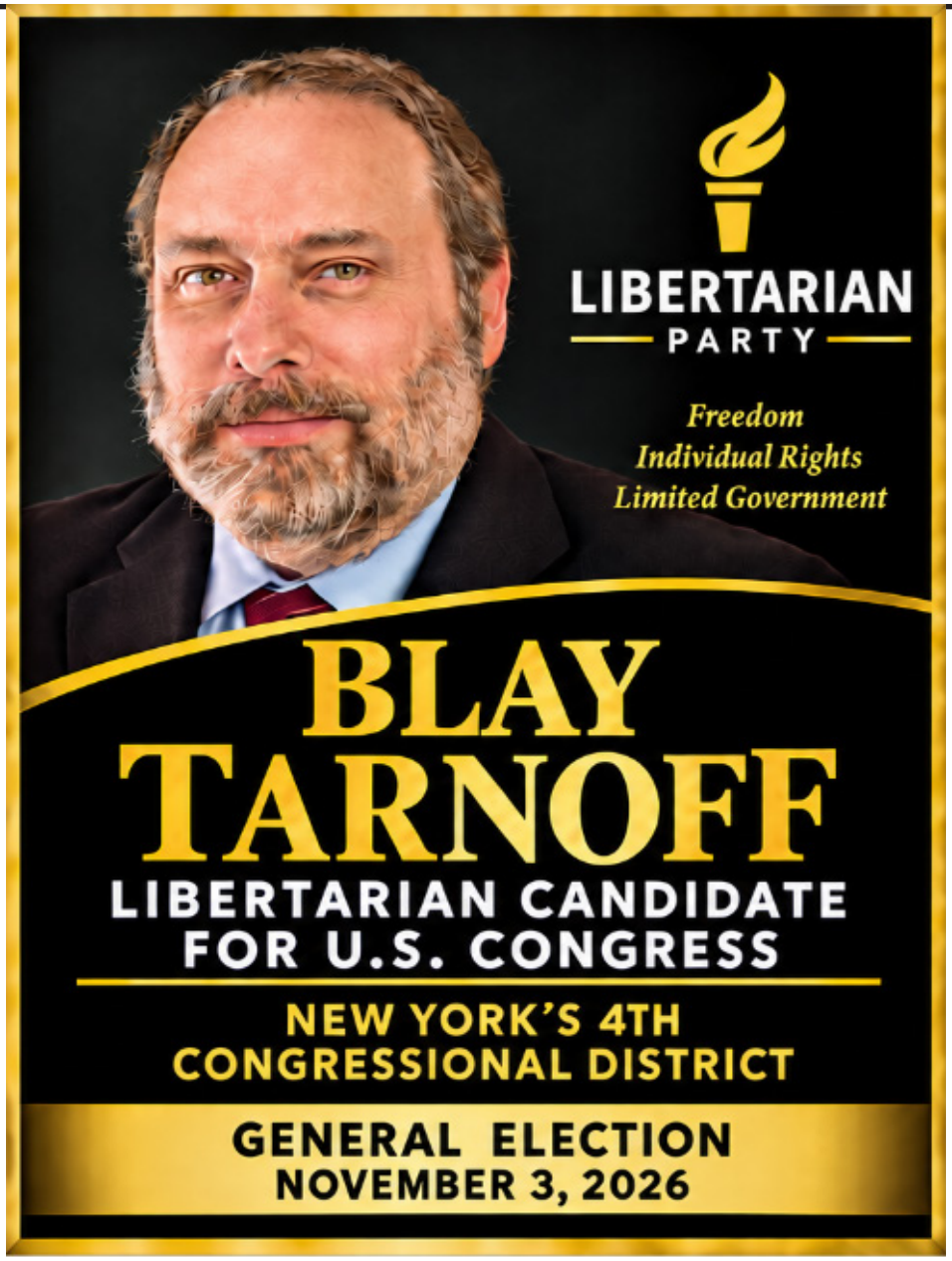
For more information, visit votenota.org

Support the LPNY!

LPNY.org/donate

# Get Your Convention Tickets Today!

## lpny.org/2026-lpny-convention




**donate to help support the campaign:**

# blay.us

**Don’t see your county listed?**

**We are looking for Libertarians to organize new County Affiliates!**

**Contact us for more details!**

**affiliates@lpny.org**

# LOCAL AFFILIATE NEWS

## CHAUTAUQUA

**CONVENTION:**
Thurs., Oct. 29, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
at 14 Main
14 Main Street,
Bemus Point, NY
and on Zoom
(usually 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., Nov. 18, 2026 @ 7 PM
Google Meet
(third Wednesdays)

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

## DUTCHESS

**NEXT MEETING:**
Sat., Nov. 21, 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., Nov. 17, 2026 at 3 PM
@ Fourth Avenue Pub
76 4th Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11217
(3rd Tuesdays)

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

## MADISON

**CONTACT:**
**Chuck Dorgan, Chair**
chuck.dorgan@gmail.com

## MONROE

**NEXT MEETING:**
Wed., Nov. 4, 2026 @ 6:30 PM
(first Wednesdays)
Contact us for the location

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

**LEARN MORE:**
monroecountylp.org
Ask about the Google Group
and social meetings

## NASSAU

**NEXT MEETING:**
Thurs., Nov. 12, 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., Nov. 18, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Liverpool Public Library
(3rd Wednesdays)

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

## ORANGE

**NEXT MEETING:**
Held 4th Thursdays. Location varies. Contact us for details.

**CONTACT:**
**Daniel Serritello, Chair**
serritel@optonline.net

## QUEENS

**NEXT MEETING:**
Sat., Nov. 14, 2026 at 12 PM
Stamatis Greek
and Mediterranean Restaurant
29-09 23rd Ave., Astoria
(2nd Saturdays)

**CONTACT:**
**Mark Weinblatt, Treasurer**
mark.weinblattfsa@gmail.com

## RENSSELAER

**NEXT MEETING:**
Wed., Nov. 4, 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., Nov. 19, 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., Nov. 9, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Hickory BBQ, Kingston, NY
(second Mondays)

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

**LEARN MORE:**
www.UlsterLP.org

## WAYNE

**MONTHLY SOCIAL:**
Sat., Oct. 24, 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

## WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM

**NEXT MEETING:**
TBD

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

# LPNY DIRECTORY

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Duane Whitmer** Chair
**Daniel Castello** Vice Chair
**Andrew Kolstee** Secretary
**Chance Haywood** Treasurer
**Christopher Skelly** Communications Director
**Mark Axinn** Fundraising Director
**Justin Carman** IT Director
**Richard Purtell** Legislative Affairs Director
**Pietro Geraci** Outreach Director
**Paul Grindle** Political Director
**Catrina Rocco** Volunteer Director

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Daniel Castello**
Platform Committee Chair
**Andrew Kolstee**
Rules Committee Chair
**Daniel Castello**
Strategic Planning Committee Chair
**Catrina Rocco**
Conventions Oversight Committee Chair

## STATE COMMITTEE

**Mark Axinn** (JD1)
**Morry Davis** (JD1)
**Paul Grindle** (JD2)
**Gary Popkin** (JD2)
**Evan Lebrecht** (JD3)
**Justin Carman** (JD3)
***Vacant*** (JD4)
***Vacant*** (JD4)
***Vacant*** (JD4)
**Daniel Castello** (JD5)
**James Fitch** (JD5)
**E. Rose Leatherman** (JD5)
**Mark Braiman** (JD6)
**Charles Dorgan** (JD6)
**Samuel Hordeski** (JD6)
**Steven Becker** (JD7)
**Justin Pelletier** (JD7)
**Sean Phelan** (JD7)
***Vacant*** (JD7)
**Maura Botsford** (JD8)
**Andrew Kolstee** (JD8)
**Wendi Szabo** (JD8)
**Duane Whitmer** (JD8)
***Vacant*** (JD8)
**Pietro Geraci** (JD9)
**Catrina Rocco** (JD9)
**William Schmidt** (JD9)
**Jonathan Gunther** (JD10)
**Vincent O'Neill** (JD10)
**Christian Padgett** (JD10)
**Robert Schuon** (JD10)
**Blay Tarnoff** (JD10)
***Vacant*** (JD10)
**Irwin Mark Weinblatt** (JD11)
***Vacant*** (JD11)
***Vacant*** (JD12)
**Susan Overeem-Cummings** (JD13)
**Chance Haywood** (ex-officio)
**Richard Purtell** (ex-officio)
**Christopher Skelly** (ex-officio)

**info@lpny.org** **www.LPNY.org** **866-336-3120**