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July 9, 2020

**TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS WEBINAR**

# All about Press Releases



League of Women Voters of the United States  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTS

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# What is a press release?

A press release is an **official statement** delivered to members of the **news media** for the purpose of providing **information**, an **official statement**, or making an **announcement**.

- Be on the record about a certain topic
- Inform the public

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# What is a press release?

Press **release** vs. press **statement**

- **Press release:** story format with quotes
  - Objective text with opinion in quotes
- **Press statement:** long quote format
  - All opinion

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# Press release

## League Files Lawsuit to Correct Error-Prone Ballot Verification Process in New York

7/8/2020

[Read a copy of the complaint here.](#)

NEW YORK CITY & WASHINGTON – Today, the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of New York State joined an individual plaintiff in a federal lawsuit to ensure absentee voters have the opportunity to cure their ballots for the remaining 2020 election cycle.

“For the past two election cycles, New York’s ballot rejection rate has been among the highest in the country,” said **Laura Bierman**, executive director for the League of Women Voters of New York State. “Voters need the opportunity to ensure their vote is counted and their voice is heard. We want to make sure that when a ballot is challenged, the voter is notified and has sufficient time to correct the error.”



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# Press statement

## LWV Celebrates the Advancement for D.C. Statehood

6/26/2020

WASHINGTON – The League of Women Voters CEO **Virginia Kase** issued the following statement following the U.S. House of Representatives passage of H.R. 51, the Washington DC Admission Act:

“Today the residents of the District of Columbia are one step closer to an equal voice in our government. The House passage of this bill is the first step to providing the more than 700,000 residents of Washington, D.C. the Congressional representation they deserve. The taxpayers of the district deserve the same rights as everyone living in all 50 states. Washingtonians deserve full voting representation in the U.S. Congress and the end of Congressional interference in the district’s government.

“D.C. statehood is not a partisan issue but a civil rights issue which cannot be separated from the fight for racial justice. As D.C. is a jurisdiction with a majority population of Black and Brown people, continued efforts to block full representation is discrimination against the people who live, work, and pay taxes in the District. For decades, Congress has refused to vote on statehood, based on racist accusations that D.C. cannot govern itself. It is long past time that we dispel with these racist and discriminatory excuses and deliver justice to the residents of our nation’s capital.



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# Why to use press releases

Visibility for your League

Take credit for your work!

Tell voters what they need to know

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# When to issue a press release

- When your League does something newsworthy
  - Filing litigation/decision on litigation
  - Issuing a report
  - Launching a campaign
- When it's important to publish a press statement
  - Voting-related bill moving through legislature
  - Impactful event in your area
- Draft ahead of time!
  - Pick a press contact
  - Pick quote attributions
- Think about making a media plan/calendar

# Anatomy of a press release

## LOGO



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

May 14, 2020

Contact: Sarah Courtney

(202) 263-1332 (office)

(917) 913-1994 (cell)

[scourtney@lwv.org](mailto:scourtney@lwv.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, WEBSITE, DATE

Norah O'Donnell to Deliver League of Women Voters Convention Keynote Address  
Norah O'Donnell to commemorate League's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with remarks in  
Norah O'Donnell to announce CBS Evening News anchor and managing editor, Norah O'Donnell, will  
deliver the keynote address for *Women Power the Vote for 100 years*, the 54<sup>th</sup> biannual League of Women Voters Convention, which will be held  
June 25-27, 2020.

"This year, the League of Women Voters is celebrating 100 years of women powering the vote, and we couldn't be more thrilled to hear from a woman leader who has made such incredible strides in the news industry," said **Chris Carson**, president of the board of directors of the League of Women Voters. "Our organization's mission of empowering voters and defending democracy depends on trusted, accurate journalism, and we are honored to be joined by a journalist who is equally dedicated to fostering an informed electorate with her reporting."

## CONTACT INFO





# Anatomy of a press release



Empowering Voters.  
Defending Democracy.

## HEADLINE: LEAGUE NAME, A FEW ACTION WORDS

Contact: Sarah Courtney  
(202) 263-1332 (office)  
(917) 913-1994 (cell)  
[scourtney@lww.org](mailto:scourtney@lww.org)

**CBS Evening News Anchor Norah O'Donnell to Deliver League of Women Voters Convention Keynote Address**

*CBS News Anchor to commemorate League's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with remarks in June 2020*

WASHINGTON – The League of Women Voters is proud to announce CBS Evening News Anchor Norah O'Donnell will deliver the keynote address for *Women Power the Vote for 100 years*, the 54<sup>th</sup> annual convention, June 25-27, 2020.

## SUBHEADLINE: MORE IMPORTANT CONTEXT IF NEEDED

"This year, the League of Women Voters is celebrating 100 years of women powering the vote, and we couldn't be more thrilled to hear from a woman leader who has made such incredible strides in the news industry," said **Chris Carson**, president of the board of directors of the League of Women Voters. "Our organization's mission of empowering voters and defending democracy depends on trusted, accurate journalism, and we are honored to be joined by a journalist who is equally dedicated to fostering an informed electorate with her reporting."



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**OPENING PARAGRAPH: CITY,  
WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY**

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**FIRST QUOTE: MOST PROMINENT,  
CATCHY, PITHY, MORE WHY**

**TIP: BOLD SPEAKER NAME**



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## **MORE CONTEXT: FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE FIRST PARAGRAPH**

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Ms. O’Donnell’s video address will be played for LWV Convention attendees on Friday, June 26 and made available on YouTube shortly after.

Read our press release statement online [HERE](#).

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Find us online: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

[The League of Women Voters](#) envisions a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate. We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.



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“Taking our convention digital this year means more of our tens of thousands of members across the country will hear from Norah O’Donnell as we commemorate not only our organization's centennial, but 100 years since the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment,” said **Virginia Kase**, CEO of the League of Women Voters. “It is only fitting that we honor our suffragist founders by standing with a powerful woman whose journalistic integrity is vitally holding our leaders accountable and informing the public.”

## **SECOND QUOTE: OPTIONAL, COULD EXPLORE SECOND ANGLE**

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**FINAL CONTEXT: NEXT STEPS,  
ACTION POINT**

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**TIP: LINK TO SOMEWHERE YOU  
WANT PEOPLE TO GO – EVENT  
PAGE, VOTE411, PETITION**

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**LINKS: OPTIONAL LINK TO PRESS RELEASE ON YOUR WEBSITE, LINKS TO SOCIAL MEDIA**

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## **BOILERPLATE: ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY**

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<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/talking-points-templates/lwv-organizational-description-template>



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# How to send a press release

- Paste into email body
  - Do not send as attachment
- Subject line: headline
- Compile a press list
- Blast to entire press list
  - Use email marketing service if you use one
- PROOF IT!
- Make reply email go to one person's inbox

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# What to do after sending

- Contact person
  - Check inbox for replies
  - Vet press inquiries
  - Coordinate/schedule interviews
- Designated interviewee
  - Take time to prep
  - Read our tips for media interviews on LMS
- Post it on your website
- Post on social media
  - Link to website
  - Add a graphic!