

ALA Empire Girls State

Steph Megan
& Molly

ALA EGS Team

#ALANY

#ALANYMW26



American Legion Auxiliary Empire Girls State

Past, Present, & Future



2026 Mid-Winter Conference

Steph Fallon: Chairman

Megan Walden: 1st Vice Chairman

Molly McLaughlin: 2nd Vice Chairman/Registrar



Founding ALA Girls State

- **1919:** American Legion Auxiliary formed
 - Early leaders were suffragettes and women's rights activists
- **1920:** 19th Amendment passes - women gain the vote
- **Early 1930s:** A concerning trend
 - Young women not exercising their right to vote or understanding candidates and issues
- **1937: ALA Girls State is born**
 - (first session in the Carolinas)
- **1941: ALA Empire Girls State's 1st session**
- **1947: ALA Girls Nation's 1st session**
 - Washington, D.C.



Our Program's Mission: Then & Now

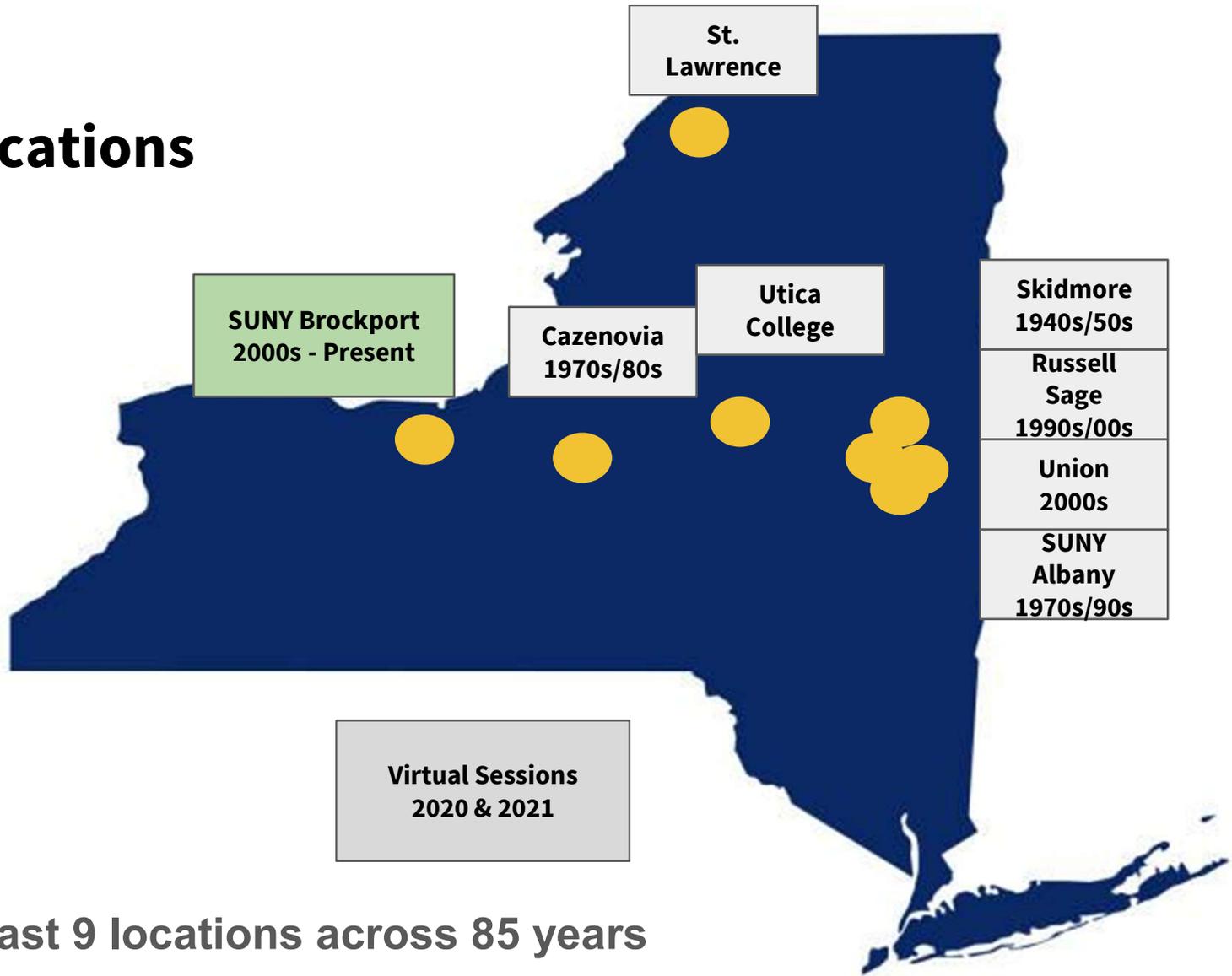
Early Program Focus Areas:

- Creating informed and engaged female voters
- Teaching political processes and self-government
- Affirming democratic values
- Building practical citizenship skills

Different Eras, Same Goals!

These core values remain our foundation today, even as the program has evolved over 85 years.

Locations



At least 9 locations across 85 years

Program Evolution & Growth

Program Size:

- Originally based on NYS Senate and Assembly
- County allocations reflected NYS legislature
- Standardized at 300 citizens
- 1992-2020: Temporarily increased to 360 citizens
- Recent years: Returned to 300 citizens - consistently at capacity!

Total Impact:

More than 30,000 young leaders have participated in ALA Empire Girls State since 1941



Program Evolution

Dress Code:

THEN:

- White gloves mandatory for Capitol tours and installation
- Business attire required daily (except rally day)

NOW:

- All citizens wear provided branded t-shirts with appropriate business-casual bottoms
 - Levels the playing field for campaigning and elections
 - Shifts focus to ideas and leadership, not appearance



Program Evolution

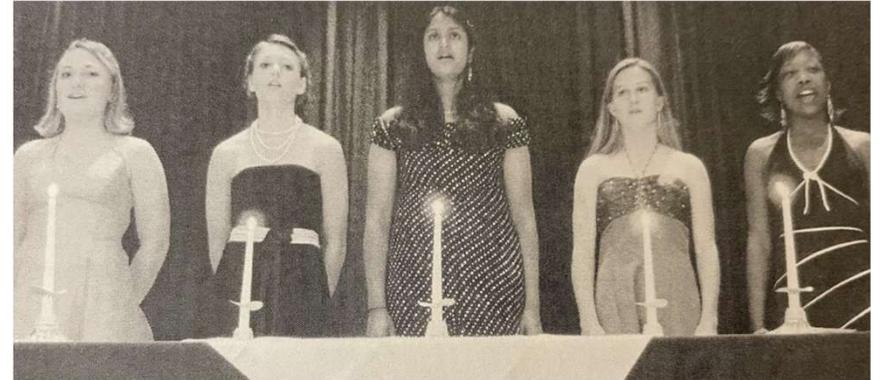
Week Structure:

THEN:

- Officers installed only on final night of the program
- This meant officers didn't govern during the week
- Bills weren't fully developed before adoption
- Limited time for citizens to experience their elected roles

NOW:

- Officers installed mid-week
- Citizens experience governing in their elected positions
- More time for thoughtful bill development and debate
- Fuller understanding of government processes





Interesting Moments

1987: Girls State Chorus at National Convention

- Two citizens from each Department participated
- Marched in parade, performed at Convention
- Required vocal tryouts and qualified judges
- The only year this special program occurred

Late 1960s/Early 1970s: The Green Party Rebellion

- **Citizens' party affiliation shown by blue or yellow ribbons**
- **Some citizens disliked being "pigeonholed" into parties**
- **They swapped ribbons with roommates - wearing both blue and yellow**
- **Formed a third party: "The Green Party" - dedicated to peace, love, cooperation, and working together**
- **Result: Promptly quashed! Led to the rule "There will be no third parties"**
- **A perfect example of citizens learning about political structure through experience!**

2000s: Parli-Pro as a Performance

- **Staff provided examples Parli Pro via a LENGTHY scripted skit...always dressed as superheroes**

This Year - Our 85th Session!

June 30 - July 6, 2026 at SUNY Brockport — REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!

What Empire Girls State IS:

- Hands-on workshops in government processes
- Running real campaigns and elections
- Writing and debating legislation
- Participating in POW/MIA and Flag Ceremonies
- The best week of your life!

What it is NOT:

- A government or history lecture
- A sports or recreation camp
- A women's history lesson
- Boring!



What does a week at ALA EGS look like?

Daily:

- Flag ceremonies
- County Work (elections, cheers)
- Committee Work (writing bills)
- General Sessions (guest speakers, instruction)
- Work time (campaigns, planning, bills...)
- Unwind, late night food, and social networking

Other Highlights:

- Americanism & ALA presentations
- POW/MIA and Flag Retirement Ceremonies
- Campaigning and Elections
- Party Caucuses
- Parade and Rally
- Service Project
- State of the State Ceremony



Why ALA EGS Matters

National Impact:

- Nearly 1 million participants since 1937
- ~20,000 participants annually

New York Impact:

- Over 30,000 alumni since 1941
- 300 citizens annually
- College credit available through accreditation

Skills Citizens Develop:

- Leadership and public speaking
- Critical thinking and debate
- Civic engagement and responsibility
- Lifelong network of leaders





Impacts of a week at ALA EGS

“This program is motivational, inspirational, fun, and life changing all at the same time. I had no idea what to expect, but the people I met, the information I gained, and the pride in my country I gained made this experience one that I will carry with me forever”

-2018 ALA EMPIRE GIRLS STATE PARTICIPANT

How to Support the Program

EASY WAYS TO HELP:

- Visit our Mid-Winter raffle table TODAY!
- Donate for a 85th Session special edition sticker - Available Now!
- Purchase items from our Amazon Wish List (on EGS website)
- Sponsor a State of the State Booster Ad
- Spread the word in your community!

GET MORE INVOLVED:

- Become a County or Unit ALA EGS Chairman
- Help with staff recruitment
- Volunteer at check-in
- Join our staff!



We can't continue this 85-year legacy
without YOUR help!



Mid-Winter Special: Donate \$5 or more and receive a limited edition sticker as a thank you!



Caraway Home Bakeware Set Raffle



THANK YOU!

Steph, EGS Chair:
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Megan, EGS 1st Vice
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Molly, EGS 2nd Vice/Registrar
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Trivia!

Total number of attendees: (25,000-30,000)

Where was the first Girls State session held (the Carolinas)

Name one of the CURRENT ALA EGS program County namesakes.

Tell us a quick anecdote of a positive EGS experience a citizen shared with you.