

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

BULLETIN

September 2011

LWVCC Website: www.lwvcc.org
P.O. Box 34 Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0034

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 14 Wed LWVCC Annual Fall Get-togethers: Concord Greene Club House, West Concord 9:00-11:00 am
Harvey Wheeler Community Center, West Concord 7:00-9:00 pm
21 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct. #208 (Anita Barker) 8:30-9:30 am

OCTOBER

- 5 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 63 Coppermine Road (Betsy Sluder) 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
12 Wed LWVCC Book Group, Trustees Room, Concord Public Library 10:00-11:30 am
12 Wed LWVCC Info Meeting on proposed new CCHS building 7:00-9:00 pm
Carlisle Town Hall
19 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct., #208 (Anita Barker) 8:30-9:30 am
26 Wed LWVCC National Education Study Consensus Meetings
Morning meeting 1360 Monument St. (Nancy Beeuwkes) 9:30-11:30 am
Evening meeting 41 Canterbury Ct. Carlisle (Cindy Nock) 7:00-9:00 pm

NOVEMBER

- 2 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 89 Crescent Rd. (Erin Pastuszynski) 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
8 Tues "Running for Office in Concord," Town House, Concord 7:30 pm
16 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct., #208 (Anita Barker) 8:30-9:30 am

DECEMBER

- 3 Sat Concord Town Meeting Coordination Meeting, Town House 8:00 am
7 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting & Holiday Pot Luck Lunch 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
1360 Monument St. (Nancy Beeuwkes) 12:00-1:30 pm lunch
14 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct., #208 (Anita Barker) 8:30-9:30 am

JANUARY

- 3 Mon Concord Town Warrant closes
4 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 100 Newbury Ct. #208 (Anita Barker) 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg
12 Wed LWVCC Membership Breakfast, topic TBA 9:00-11:00 am
18 Wed LWVCC ESC meeting, 100 Newbury Ct. #208 (Anita Barker) 8:30-9:30 am

FEBRUARY

- 1 Wed LWVCC Board Meeting, 41 Canterbury Ct. Carlisle (Cindy Nock) 9 coffee, 9:30 mtg

Members are invited to attend monthly Board meetings.
Please contact Cindy or Paula if you would like to attend any of them.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization of men and women formed in 1920 and dedicated to the principles of self government established by the Constitution of the United States. The League works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Table with 3 columns: Role, Name, Contact Info. Includes Co-Presidents (Cindy Nock, Paula Vandever), Membership (Dee Ortner), Bulletin Editor (Anne Hayden), and Webmaster (Julie Rohwein).

EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Cindy Nock and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

September 2011

Dear League Friends,

After a busy summer with many members of the LWVCC working on specific activities, we are beginning another exciting year that promises to bring us together to educate ourselves and the public and to advocate for important issues. It is so fulfilling to work with all of the intelligent, hopeful and committed people in our League. We have several committees going strong:

- Town Government Initiative committee
- CCHS Building Project committee
- Candidates Forums committee
- Campaign Finance committee – focusing on ameliorating the damage from the Citizens United SCOTUS decision
- Communications and Media committee – soon to teach us about social media
- LWVUS study of the Federal Role in Education
- LWVUS study of the impact of Privatization
- Running for Office committee and
- Membership committee.

If you would like to join one of these committees, give us a call and we will put you in touch with its chair.

This year the LWVUS National Convention will be held in Washington, D.C. on June 8th to 12th. Our league is already actively working to influence the National League Board to choose for its theme “Campaign Finance Reform.”

This year we think we have something that will interest everyone, and we hope that you will be able to take part in one or more of these important activities and enjoy each other’s company at the same time. Many of you have already become engaged by participating in the LWVCC Membership Survey. Thank you! If you indicated an interest, you will be contacted by some of these committees and informed of the dates of meetings. Our immediate local priorities are: the CCHS Building Project – our LWVCC Education Position enables us to support it and the Board will decide whether this project merits such support and advocacy; upcoming “How to Get Elected” workshops; and the two above mentioned studies and consensus programs from the LWVUS.

It is amazing what a few, or many, dedicated citizens can do to influence governmental policy. As is written in the *Member Handbook* of the LWVMA: “Our goal remains to help create a participatory democracy for the 21st century – a democracy where the citizens are actively engaged in shaping governmental policies that affect their lives and where the government solicits and values citizen involvement.” It is a critical time in the U.S. and more important than ever to work to “Make Democracy Work.” Thank you all for what you are doing in that effort!

Sincerely,

Cindy Nock and Paula Vandever, Co-Presidents

LWVCC MEMBER NEWS

Two highly successful and fun happenings occurred on September 14th. Concord Greene's clubhouse was the location for our morning Autumn get-together where 31 people, including Cory Atkins (cory.atkins@mahouse.gov) who spoke about the hot topics facing the state and Michelle Ernst (outreach@cchsbuilding.org) who took questions and discussed the high school building project, participated. The evening session at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center also was well attended with 24 people who had an opportunity to hear from Louis Salemy, a Carlisle representative on the school building project, in addition to our Co-Presidents.

By tweaking the meeting format, we found more time for mingling and speaking one-on-one about our current initiatives, such as campaign finance, healthcare, town government, the national education study, voter service, and the October book group meeting. A HUGE thank you to Erica Morrison who organized and orchestrated all the food and beverages for both sessions, and to all who could attend!

This year we started our membership renewal and sign-up at the September 7th Board meeting and continued with receiving payments during the September 14th get-togethers. Thank you to all who gave us their checks (and saved us postage). If you have not as yet paid, you can mail a check to LWVCC, P.O. Box 34, Concord, MA 01742. We are investigating the use of PayPal to collect dues and will let you know if access through our website is possible in an upcoming MMN - Monday Member Newsletter – or through our reminder letter that will go out in early October.

As a reminder, this year's dues are for July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012 and everyone is on the same cycle (former national members too). Next year we will start our membership renewal process at Annual Meeting (late May) and continue through June 2012 in an effort to have our membership drive coincide with our fiscal calendar.

Finally, the Membership Committee would like to hear from you regarding suggestions and locations for upcoming member events as well as ideas for helping us recruit new members and retain our current Leaguers. You can reach us at membership@lwvcc.org. We look forward to seeing you soon!

*Dee Ortner, Membership chair
Committee: Nancy Beeuwkes, Mary Chapman, Irmi Doane, Barbara Lewis & Cindy Collen (new member)*

LWVCC BOOK GROUP

The first meeting of the year will be on Wednesday, October 12, 2011 from 10:00-11:30 am in the Trustees Room of the Concord Public Library. We will discuss *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* by Ahmed Rashid.

Rashid is a Pakistani journalist who “examines Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia as well as the corridors of power in Washington and Europe to see how the promised nation building has progressed. His conclusions are devastating: an unstable and nuclear-armed Pakistan, a renewed Al Qaeda and a Taliban resurgence and reconquest. As he predicted, Pakistan and Afghanistan are now where the real war is. His blistering critique of American policy is a dire warning and an impassioned call to correct our failed strategies. There is no more urgent global task.” (quote from back cover)

The LWVCC Book Group meets five times a year to discuss nonfiction books that focus on national and international issues and historical perspectives. All League members and Concord and Carlisle residents are invited to participate. All are welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.

*Anne Hayden & Ginny Lamere
LWVCC Book Group co-chairs*

CCHS BUILDING PROJECT LOCAL PRIORITY ISSUE

Education is a high priority issue for the League. Currently there is a proposed new building project for the Concord Carlisle High School which we expect will be presented to both towns first at Special Town Meetings in early November and then at the ballot box in mid-November. In order for the project to move forward the plan has to pass the two votes in both towns - town meeting vote and ballot vote. The dates for these votes are still tentative pending official acceptance of the project by the MSBA (Mass. School Building Authority) which should happen at the end of September.

Now is the time for us to study the CCHS project plan and come to a consensus at our November 2 board meeting as to whether the LWVCC supports the project and wants to make a statement at both town meetings.

BACKGROUND

The current building was constructed in the 60s and 70s when the baby boom generation was overwhelming school districts across the nation. Schools with a life expectancy of 50 years were built very quickly in a style more suitable for the warm climates of the west coast. The current high school is energy inefficient, technologically insufficient and has systems that are outdated.

Renovations in the 90s addressed some issues but major maintenance projects, such as roof replacement, have since been deferred in anticipation of a new school building project. It has been estimated that it would take \$70 million dollars to bring the current building up to current code requirements and would not receive any MSBA reimbursement.

Since 2002, Concord has replaced two elementary schools at a cost of \$29.5 million and ?? million and done a major addition and renovation to a third elementary school at a cost of \$18.5 million. Carlisle is currently doing a major addition and renovation to its k-8 school at a projected cost of \$20 million.

CCHS BUILDING PROJECT

The new CCHS building project plan is to replace the current school with a new building at a cost to the communities of \$64.5 million after

a 35% reimbursement of \$28 million from the state. Based on the current assessment ratio, Concord would be responsible for \$47.1 million and Carlisle \$17.4 million.

The new building is designed to meet the educational and community needs with energy and environmental elements for long term sustainability.

The new building will be sited to take advantage of day lighting and will be solar ready (an additional \$800,000 would be needed to install photovoltaic panels on the roof). The construction will use high performance operable windows and a high performance building envelope consisting of four floors instead of the current sprawling building. The landscaping incorporates environmentally green elements such as bike paths and rain gardens. The mechanical systems feature high-efficiency measures for energy efficiency and increased air quality.

TIMELINE

These dates are subject to change – go to www.lwvcc.org for updates and more specifics

Sept 20: School Building Committee info meeting in Carlisle Corey Auditorium

Sept 21: School Building Committee info meeting in Concord CCHS Little Theatre

Sept 22: Joint meeting of Concord & Carlisle Selectmen, School and Finance Committees in the Concord Town House

Sept 28: MSBA announcement of decision re state funding of CCHS building project

Oct 12: LWVCC & School Building Committee info meeting in Carlisle Town Hall

Oct 27: Concord Finance Committee hearing

Nov 7: Concord Special Town Meeting

Nov 8: Carlisle Special Town Meeting

Nov 15: Ballot vote in Concord and in Carlisle of CCHS Building project

Cindy Nock, LWVCC co-president

VOTER SERVICE

This year, LWVCC has two board members heading up Voter Service activities: Barbara Lewis (Carlisle) and Erin Pastuszewski (Concord). You can reach them anytime at VoterService@lhwcc.org or by phone (Barbara at 978-287-0049; Erin at 978-369-3842).

Voter Service includes a variety of voting and election-related activities, like:

- Providing information on voter registration, voting and elections (at www.lhwcc.org, for example)
- Organizing voter registration and get out the vote efforts
- Publishing voters' guides, like the annual guide to local candidates in the *Concord Journal*
- Sponsoring candidate forums (local, state legislative and Congressional)
- Helping to plan informational meetings on topics that come before the voters, like town and school budgets or building projects
- Working on other League projects that inform our communities about government and encourage them to get involved.

Concord Voter Service

LWVCC has voter registration tables at every back-to-school night this fall. They continue into October with Willard (10/5), Peabody (10/6), Sanborn (10/13) and CCHS (10/20). Contact Erin to volunteer. Thanks to all who have helped so far!

Nancy Cronin, working with Concord Town Clerk Anita Tekle, recently completed an updated "Getting Elected in Concord" booklet. You can view it at www.lhwcc.org or pick up a copy at the Town House. We are grateful for Nancy's excellent work on this timely publication.

The annual Town Caucus to nominate candidates for local office is coming in January 2012. Offices appearing on the March 2012 ballot in Concord are Town Moderator, Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Housing

Authority. The League hopes to encourage more people to toss their hats into the ring by hosting a "Running for Office in Concord" workshop at the Town House on Tuesday, November 8, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. Past candidates and our Town Clerk will share information and experiences and answer questions. All Concord residents who are curious about running for local office are welcome! Watch LWVCC's website for more details.

Erin Pastuszewski, Concord Voter Service

Carlisle Voter Services

In the short term, the CCHS Building Project is demanding attention, so that voters in Carlisle can make a well informed decision at Special Town Meetings and Elections this Fall. To that end, a mid-October public forum is being planned in addition to the various town meetings with Selectmen and Fin Com that are on the calendar.

Taking a longer view, preparing for the elections that will be coming up in 2012, Erin and I are looking forward to creating opportunities to educate citizens on how to run for public office. Encouraging participation in our local government is critical for the health of our towns, and helping people to understand the process will be a good step along that path. Concord has a date of November 8 at 7:30 for their presentation by Town Clerk Anita Tekle. We in Carlisle are making arrangements for a similar opportunity and will set a date soon.

Updating the "Know Your Town" and "Getting Elected" publications for Carlisle will also be addressed and made available online and in print in the coming months.

After several years as Membership Chair, I am looking forward to focusing on Voter Services here in Carlisle and working with Erin as my Concord partner.

Barbara Lewis, Carlisle Voter Service

TOWN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

At our annual meeting in May, the membership voted to continue this initiative started last year. We have not had a large observer corps in Concord in recent years, and indirectly this has led to lesser awareness of the happenings of our Town government. This committee is one way we are gathering information and building our knowledge of local government.

One of our early considerations was the fact that local elections tend to have only one person running for a seat, and how could we encourage more people to run. Simultaneously, Nancy Cronin was revising the League pamphlet “Getting Elected in Concord” (now available and being distributed at the Town Hall). Erin Pastuszewski, Voter Service (Concord), has organized a workshop for potential candidates on November 8th.

Another interest was how the various town boards/committees communicate and work together on projects that require approval by several entities. We are slowly enlisting observers to some committees, and hope to have even more. In the past, Leagues have researched and published “Know Your Town” books, and we are considering a version of that for today’s media.

We are refreshing our knowledge of the open meeting laws. Louise Haldeman has distributed guidelines for observers to follow when they attend meetings. Observers are just that—they are not participants in the meeting. At our last meeting we discussed finances and the proposed building plan for CCHS. We are also considering a bus tour of town facilities possibly next spring. Do you know where the town wells are? Have you visited the sewage plant lately? Or the light plant?

We encourage all to use the Town website for information, and to sign up for the Town Manager’s weekly report to the Selectmen as a start: www.concordma.gov/Subscriber. I recently received a list of members who are interested in joining us, and I hope others will join us also. Contact Ardis Bordman, 369.7914, or TownInitiative@lwvcc.org.

Ardis Bordman

FROM THE NEW COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

I am fairly new to the League as an active member. I’ve just taken over the communications portfolio from the able hands of Erin Pastuszewski, who has moved on to direct Voter Services for Concord. I am a 20 year resident of West Concord (since 1991). In my non-League life, I am an active composer and teacher.

Last spring a committee was formed to review our current communications practices and look for ways to improve communications with our members and with the public. This process is still underway, but you will already have seen one change—the introduction of “Monday Member News,” suggested by Barbara Lewis and Dee Ortner. You will see additional changes over the next year as we work to improve our use of online resources, local television, and other means for stimulating discussion and disseminating information to our membership and to the public.

The committee is also developing a set of procedures, templates and tools to help leaders of various projects and committees better publicize their events and reports. Our committee is happy to welcome new members. If you are interested, or have other questions about communications and media, please contact me at Communications@lwvcc.org. Otherwise, stay tuned for further developments.

Julie Rohwein, Communications

CAMPAIGN FINANCE & (UNDUE) INFLUENCE ON ELECTIONS (Follow the Money: FT\$)

Charge from LWVCC Annual Meeting (May 2011):

A Committee will be formed to address issues around campaign finance and fallout from the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

Background:

1. LWVUS Position on Campaign Finance - *Statement of Position on Campaign Finance, as Announced by National Board, January 1974 and Revised March 1982:*

- **The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process.**
- *This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office — presidential and congressional, primaries as well as general elections. It also may be applied to state and local campaigns.*

2. LWVUS Priority Issue: Money In Elections

“Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. In the wake of *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), which threw out vital protections against corporate and union spending in elections, as well as recent efforts to destroy the presidential public financing system, the League’s Money and Elections work takes even greater precedence. While special interest money was always a concern in elections, corporations including foreign corporations may now intervene directly in elections, taking power away from voters. To mitigate the corruption that will inevitably increase following the Court’s tragic mistake, the League strongly supports legislation that will enhance disclosure, fix the public financing system for presidential candidates and establish congressional public financing.”

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Campaign_Finance_Reform

Purpose of local program:

- Educate the membership and the public on campaign finance including the impacts of the Citizens United decision
- Inform the public on ways to become more involved and to take action
- Share our information and opinions with the LWVMA and LWVUS

Recommended Program Activities:

1. Local Level –

- Various towns in the state (9 at last count) have passed articles at TM supporting measures to protect elections from undue corporate influence or corruption. One working group will investigate and research the need for developing a warrant article for Concord and Carlisle.
- Identify public and collaborative opportunities and events for members to attend in an effort to become more familiar with issues; we will promote these educational events
- Hold a high visibility / high impact forum with moderator and 3 speakers which focuses on educating the public on how campaigns are being financed including the impact from the Citizens United decision
- Other education outreach activities include: working with libraries and book stores to have “democracy” window displays; showing movies; developing reading/documentary/DVD lists; and building a “FT\$ Travel Kit” to make available to other LWV chapters

2. Regional Level –

- Work with other Leagues and LWVMA to intensify the focus on this issue. Many Leagues already are interested in working with us and meetings have begun on sharing information and developing common strategies
- Focus efforts at the state level, both LWVMA and state legislature, and inform our constituency on what is happening and what action to take. For example, an examination of *disclosure* at the state level is being considered.

3. National Level - LWVUS 2012 Convention

- Work with regional League chapters and those across the country to strengthen LWV campaign finance position
- Attempt to influence the theme of National Convention and spearhead efforts to recruit speakers to address this topic
- Prepare for a workshop and caucus at National Convention that will result in further action at the national level

UPDATE:

The League's Follow The Money (FT\$) Committee has 12 active members and an additional 13 members who stay informed about the committee's activities via email. We meet about every 2 weeks. If you would like to join the conversation, learn about the history of money in politics and help us follow the money in the current campaign era, please contact Becky Shannon, FollowTheMoney@lwvcc.org.

Our FT\$ Proposal for action was accepted by the LWVCC Board at the September meeting and we are now launching into the planning phase. In preparation for the LWVUS Convention in Washington DC where we hope to conduct a workshop and caucus, we wrote to President Elisabeth MacNamara :

Dear President MacNamara and 2012 Convention Planners:

The LWV of Concord-Carlisle, Massachusetts, writes to recommend that the theme of the June 2012 Convention be the overriding threat to democracy in the United States.

The accelerating erosion of policies and laws enacted to protect voter rights and blunt the corrupting influence of money in politics is alarming. While the 20th century was remarkable for efforts attempting to curb the influence of money in politics, the failure to put in place alternative solutions to funding elections, e.g. a public campaign funding mechanism, now threatens our democracy as the Supreme Court overturns laws and regulations controlling money in campaigns and Congress refuses to address the issue. The "people" have been essentially removed from the political process as our choices are narrowed to candidates financed and controlled by corporate/union/special interest money.

As the LWV approaches its centennial, our mission - Making Democracy Work - is in trouble. All LWV positions on all issues are now in jeopardy. No other topic can have greater relevance at our 2012 Convention.

Thank you for your consideration,

League of Women Voters Concord-Carlisle, Massachusetts

Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission

Facts of the Case:

Citizens United sought an injunction against the Federal Election Commission in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia to prevent the application of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) to its film *Hillary: The Movie*. *The Movie* expressed opinions about whether Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton would make a good president.

In an attempt to regulate "big money" campaign contributions, the BCRA applies a variety of restrictions to "electioneering communications." Section 203 of the BCRA prevents corporations or labor unions from funding such communication from their general treasuries. Sections 201 and 311 require the disclosure of donors to such communication and a disclaimer when the communication is not authorized by the candidate it intends to support.

Citizens United argued that: 1) Section 203 violates the First Amendment on its face and when applied to *The Movie* and its related advertisements, and 2) Sections 201 and 203 are also unconstitutional as applied to the circumstances.

The United States District Court denied the injunction. Section 203 on its face was not unconstitutional because the Supreme Court in *McConnell v. FEC* had already reached that determination. The District Court also held that *The Movie* was the functional equivalent of express advocacy, as it attempted to inform voters that Senator Clinton was unfit for office, and thus Section 203 was not unconstitutionally applied. Lastly, it held that Sections 201 and 203 were not unconstitutional as applied to the *The Movie* or its advertisements. The court reasoned that the *McConnell* decision recognized that disclosure of donors "might be unconstitutional if it imposed an unconstitutional burden on the freedom to associate in support of a particular cause," but those circumstances did not exist in Citizens United's claim.

Question:

- 1) Did the Supreme Court's decision in *McConnell* resolve all constitutional as-applied challenges to the BCRA when it upheld the disclosure requirements of the statute as constitutional?
- 2) Do the BCRA's disclosure requirements impose an unconstitutional burden when applied to electioneering requirements because they are protected "political speech" and not subject to regulation as "campaign speech"?
- 3) If a communication lacks a clear plea to vote for or against a particular candidate, is it subject to regulation under the BCRA?
- 4) Should a feature length documentary about a candidate for political office be treated like the advertisements at issue in *McConnell* and therefore be subject to regulation under the BCRA?

Conclusion:

No. No. Yes. Yes. The Supreme Court overruled *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* and portions of *McConnell v. FEC*. (In the prior cases, the Court had held that political speech may be banned based on the speaker's corporate identity.) By a 5-to-4 vote along ideological lines, the majority held that under the First Amendment corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections cannot be limited. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote for the majority joined by Chief Justice John G. Roberts and Justices Antonin G. Scalia, Samuel A. Alito, and Clarence Thomas. Justice John Paul Stevens dissented, joined by Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, and Sonia Sotomayor. The majority maintained that political speech is indispensable to a democracy, which is no less true because the speech comes from a corporation. The majority also held that the BCRA's disclosure requirements as applied to *The Movie* were constitutional, reasoning that disclosure is justified by a "governmental interest" in providing the "electorate with information" about election-related spending resources. The Court also upheld the disclosure requirements for political advertising sponsors and it upheld the ban on direct contributions to candidates from corporations and unions.

In a separate concurring opinion, Chief Justice Roberts, joined by Justice Alito, emphasized the care with which the Court handles constitutional issues and its attempts to avoid constitutional issues when at all possible. Here, the Court had no narrower grounds upon which to rule, except to handle the First Amendment issues embodied within the case. Justice Scalia also wrote a separate concurring opinion, joined by Justices Alito and Thomas in part, criticizing Justice Stevens' understanding of the Framers' view towards corporations. Justice Stevens argued that corporations are not members of society and that there are compelling governmental interests to curb corporations' ability to spend money during local and national elections.

Decision: 5 votes for Citizens United, 4 vote(s) against. http://www.oyez.org/cases/2000-2009/2008/2008_08_205

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

UPDATE:

A CASE OF HURRY UP AND WAIT!

The LWVMA Program and Action Committee is focused on three major pieces of environmental legislation:

- **The Safer Alternatives Bill (SAB):**
HB1136; SB 397
(<http://www.healthytomorrow.org/2011/01/sa-cosponsors-2011.html>).
- **The E-Waste Bill:** *HB 252*
(<http://www.cleanwateraction.org/program/initiative/electronics-take-back-campaign>)
- **The Updated Bottle Bill (UBB):** *HB 890; SB1650*
(<http://www.masspirg.org/issues/reduce-reuse-recycle/update-the-bottle-bill>)

We were off to a fast start in the new legislative session. Hearings for all three bills were held within a 2-3 month period this past summer. All three hearings were packed with advocates and there was excellent testimony on behalf of all LWVMA bills. Supporters also received strong, favorable indicators during the Safer Alternatives and E-Waste hearings from Committee Chairmen regarding passage.

There are recent, encouraging signs that an E-Waste Bill will move out of Committee and to the Senate for a vote before the end of the session. LWVMA supports strong E-waste legislation and testified on behalf of Representative Smizik's and Senator Eldridge's legislation.

Of the E-Waste bills filed this session, SB 166 (rewrite): *Computer and Television Recycling Target Model State Legislation* filed by Senator Pacheco, has quantifiable objectives and provisions that are known to increase successful and responsible recycling of E-Waste. The Pacheco bill was filed the day before the hearing so there was no opportunity for the comparison and review necessary for advocacy and written testimony during the hearing. LWVMA testimony in support of the Smizik/Eldridge E-Waste bills was submitted prior to the hearing; testimony in support of Senator Pacheco's bill, SB 166, is being drafted.

The Updated Bottle Bill still faces strong opposition from the food and beverage industry, but public and legislative support is high with over 80 Legislators as co-signers of the bill and 77% of MA residents polled favoring an update. While papers were successfully filed to preserve the option of a ballot initiative, the preferred route to passage is legislative.

Legislative activity essentially stopped during the August recess. The current focus of State House activity has been the Casino Bill, which may have passed by the time this Bulletin is published. It is also likely that once the casino matter is resolved, serious consideration of LWVMA priority legislation and other major bills will resume.

Launa Zimmaro, Environmental Affairs

LWVCC VOTER SERVICE - INFORMATION MEETING

Topic: CCHS Building Project

Date: Wednesday, Oct 12, 2011 7-9 pm

**Where: Clark Room, Carlisle Town Hall
and on CCTV Channel 8**

How much will it cost?

What will it look like?

Why build it now?

When will it be done?

CASINO GAMBLING YET AGAIN

*[Editor's note: See update below]*As most of us know by now, the Massachusetts Legislature will soon be considering another bill that would legalize casino gambling (also referred to as Class 3 gambling) in Massachusetts. This bill is very similar to one that was rejected by the Governor last year and is the result of a compromise between the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate president. The main difference and the result of the compromise is that this bill will also allow for one slot parlor in a race track.

While we welcome politicians who are able to compromise and wish that those in Washington would do so as well, in this case it is hard to see what benefit this bill will bring to the Commonwealth. It is true that a successful casino will provide a great many jobs, and at a time when many people are looking for work that is a serious consideration. However, there is very little evidence that three more casinos in the New England market, once built, will be successful. There has been no truly independent cost/benefit analysis of the possible revenues.

The casinos in nearby states are losing money, the ones in Atlantic City float in and out of bankruptcy and Las Vegas is no longer a cash cow for Nevada. Investment analysts, economists, and the state of Connecticut have warned Massachusetts that there is not much money to be made this way although the huge licensing fees would bring in some initial moneys.

There is also the question of where casinos would be located and where the workforce would come from. A slot parlor at a race track may indeed have both a potential workforce and a clientele nearby but what about the casinos which are intended for more rural areas? Do the communities have enough people on site to staff the casinos? If not, where will they come from and what will be the effects good and bad on the host community?

The proposed bill does set aside funds for helping the host communities with the costs and a process for deciding which nearby communities would be affected. It also proposes

to set aside funds to help with problem gamblers. It forbids the serving of alcohol between 2 AM and 5 AM but the casinos themselves could be open 24 hours. But no matter how good the intentions, 20% of nothing is still nothing.

Last but not least there remains the question of Native American casinos. The bill requires that one license be set aside for a Native American tribe. Massachusetts has two such tribes. More may apply for recognition. If the two tribes can get together and if they can find suitable land all may be well but remember any Native American tribe as a sovereign nation can do anything on their own land that is legal in the state. The ramifications of this are considerable and mostly under the radar.

The Legislature wishes to move on this very fast, presumably before most people including some of the legislators themselves have had time to really read the bill. As one who has read it I believe that it needs to be studied very carefully and should not be rushed. There can be no possible benefit to the Commonwealth by pushing through this without giving the public a chance to react. With the possible exception of the slot parlor, many months - probably years - lie between the application for and acceptance of a license and the opening of a casino.

Should the sponsors succeed in bringing this to a vote within the next week, then by the time this article is published, it will appear to be a done deal. But the story will not end there. The second stage of the wrangling, arguing, and lobbying will have begun and what it will cost in terms of tax dollars, legislative time, and public disillusionment is yet to be determined.

*Louise Haldeman,
LWVM Casino Gambling Specialist*

9/18/2011 Update: The House has passed the bill and the Senate will probably follow but there will be many rivers to cross before casinos become a reality in the Commonwealth..

Louise

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

*Introduction: National and state **League of Women Voters** chapters have made a significant commitment to domestic violence prevention with reports in every **Concord-Carlisle League** newsletter. Included:*

- **Rachel's Box Project**
- **Domestic Violence Services Network [DVSN]**
(including **DVVAP & Network for Women's Lives [NWL]**)
- other timely area projects

Rachel's Box Project serves victims of domestic violence, as well as child and elder abuse, in **50 locations around the western suburbs**. Please notify Nancy James 978-369-2771 if you notice boxes in disarray or needing materials. **The Network for Women's Lives** Rachel's Box Committee tends the boxes and provides updated materials and *Network* newsletters.

Domestic Abuse Outreach Expands to Spas and Salons via Rachel's Boxes



Carousel Rachel's Boxes have been donated by Arbella Insurance Company and the N.P. James Insurance Agency to launch a new initiative for placement in spas and salons. Nancy James remarks, "Spas and salons will help reach a new level of victims to offer support and assistance." Jacquelin Apsler, Executive Director of DVSN-DVVAP remarked "They will be an integral part of DVSN's new Salon and Spa Initiative."

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

A Candlelight Vigil: Remembering victims of domestic violence annual candlelight vigil. It will be held at the Acton Congregational Church in Acton, MA, 12 Concord Rd., on Thursday, October 13 from 6:45 pm to 9:00 pm. The keynote address will be "A Survivor's Story." Coffee and Dessert will follow.

This event is co-sponsored by the **Domestic Violence Services Network**, **Hagar's Sisters** and **The Sudbury Wayland Lincoln Domestic Violence Round Table**. For more information on volunteering, or to learn more about the vigil, e-mail dvvap@concordma.gov or call 978-318-3421

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