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LWVCCA PRESIDENT’S GREETINGS

Members;

I have been wordy recently. Unfortunately, what has been happening in our country could send me into a continuous rant. But I will control my anger and try to focus on a few key thoughts. First, while there is still much to do around the Cape and within our State, I have to say that I am extremely thankful that I live in Massachusetts.

Even with our issues, we are somewhat insulated from the extremes that are taking place in a number of other regions. However, this is both a blessing and a curse. It is so easy to become complacent when our efforts here seem to be paying off and moving us forward. That is not the case in so many other States where the direction seems to be heading backwards. So, I will simply point out a number of National issues that we must all think about and try to determine how we, as members of the LWVCCA, can be more effective.

- Amazingly, the ERA, drafted in 1923 and passed by both chambers of Congress in 1972 has yet to be ratified as the 28th Amendment even though the required number of states (38) have approved it.
- Voter Suppression Laws continue to be implemented in a number of states moving us backwards, not forwards.
- Numerous states have passed increasingly restrictive laws that infringe on a Woman’s Right to control her own body and health.
- The archaic “filibuster rule” (this is not even a law, simply a working rule that is subject to change), Senate Rule 22, is used indiscriminately to obstruct any kind of business that is brought before the Senate Chamber by Republican Senators who have apparently decided that they swore an oath to protect and defend the former President instead of the Constitution of the United States.
- The Supreme Court of the US, whose charge is to interpret the laws has somehow become a partisan control board that enforces some laws and backs off of doing anything for others.

- Discrimination of POC and LBGTQ persons continues pretty much unchallenged around the country. In addition, anti-Native American Treaty changes have increasingly taken place at the state and federal level.
- With the drawing of new legislative districts on the basis of the 2020 inaccurate census taking place, gerrymandering will increase due to biased gubernatorial leaders.
- Nationwide gun violence still continues unchecked. Immigration issues have become increasingly horrific.
- Congress has abdicated its responsibility for decades through its unwillingness to address this issue. The only solution is through Congressional action and that does not appear to be happening any time soon without consistent constituent pressure.
- Finally, the Media in America has become more of a reality show instead of an unbiased distribution agency for delivering hard news without opinion. No longer are we just told what’s happening. Now, in most cases, we are given opinions, half-truths and even lies delivered under the heading of News. In addition, the “news” is screened as to what we are told and what we are not. The best way to end up under authoritarian rule is to do away with truthful, open media.

Unfortunately, the Republicans understand much better than the Democrats that actions speak louder than words. It is time for the Democrats to flex their muscles and stop talking so much. Without some positive action noting will get better and it could get substantially worse. Democracy is in peril. The solution lies in our hands; not just League members, but everyone. Our task right now is to consistently reach out to our elected officials. We also need to reach out to neighbors, family members and colleagues to encourage them to become engaged and participate in voting. Finally, with autumn advancing and COVID still hanging on, we need to reach across the aisle and

encourage dialogue with those that may have differing opinions to ours. Unless we all begin to see the danger lurking in the actions taking place in Washington, we will all fall victim to the resulting fallout.

Suzanne

CALENDAR

BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY November 2 | 9:30 a.m.
[Zoom conference by invitation](#)

VETERANS DAY

THURSDAY November 11

THANKSGIVING

THURSDAY November 25



UPCOMING

BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY December 7 | 9:30 a.m.
[Zoom conference by invitation](#)

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/LWVCCA-calendar> to see our entire Google calendar. Click on any calendar listing to see more detail.

OCTOBER 5 BOARD MEETING

Karen Mazza investigated an in-person event at the Clubhouse at Cobblestone Landing in Hyannis. After three board members voiced strong reservations about in-person events, the board decided to poll the membership about an in-person vs. Zoom event.

Parity on Boards (An Act to ensure gender parity and racial and ethnic diversity on public

boards and commissions: H3157/S2077) hearing update: Jeanne Morrison reported that LWVMA and LWVCCA members have provided both oral and written testimony in favor of this bill.

Voter Service Committee update: Anita Rogers, Rosemary Shields, Mati Ligon and we are planning a meeting with people of color (POC) from the upper Cape to discuss strategies for reaching POC in preparation for the midterm elections next year, and we have sent an email to our committee members to plan how to reach other underrepresented and disillusioned voters in preparation for the midterms next year. Outreach will include women of color, veterans, people with disabilities, LGBTG communities. Jeanne and Elaine volunteered to help with this work.

Drawing Democracy came out with their suggestions for majority / minority districts in Boston and surrounding areas. Check our Facebook Page for more information. Rosemary will report on what's happening in the Barnstable districts.

The Legislative Committee now has three Co-Chairs: Renate Sands, Carole Young-Kleinfeld and Elaine Dickinson.

The planned forum to address the Common Start Legislation (An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S362>) is scheduled for Saturday April 13. After January 1, the committee will decide whether the forum will be via Zoom or in person at the Harwich Community Center.

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS:

"It is important to get everybody to vote! I joined The League because it is an organization known for getting the vote out. Perhaps in some small way I can help with that effort to preserve our democracy." Catherine Buchholz

Once again, the League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area is fortunate in gaining a new member who has a "roll-up-my-sleeves-and-get-to-work" attitude. She has strongly put into action her voiced concerns regarding the threats to American democracy as millions of Americans have become chronic non-voters. Catherine wants to be an integral part of the movement to turn the situation around. In addition to her believing that the American vote must be trusted and must be honored, Catherine has worked at getting the vote out. She has experience in registering first-time voters. In her working with the North Carolina NAACP she wrote hundreds of postcards to get voters out to vote. An acquaintance she met in a book club who needed help, introduced Catherine to "Let Your Voice Be Heard". The rest is history concerning the dedicated time and effort Catherine put into the 2020 U.S. voter registration work in informing thousands of Americans about the importance of voting. Now that she is a LWVCCA member it is certain that Catherine's spirit of commitment to voter registration and voter education will serve to fortify the on-going work of the LWVCCA.

Catherine Buchholz earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Marist College in New York; and her Master of Education degree from the University of Connecticut. During her professional career as a public school educator she served in various school districts in Connecticut. During her post retirement she helped to design a Teacher Leadership Program affiliated with the University of Connecticut. Catherine currently resides in Dennis; has two married sons and two grand-daughters ages two and seven.

Catherine Buchholz

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Submitted by Mati Ligon,
Chair, LWVCCA Membership Committee

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Our committee members have been following many bills as they move through the various committees of the state legislature on their way to becoming laws. We appreciate the hard work and diligence of all our LWVCCA members in submitting written testimony, contacting their legislators, testifying at hearings, and participating in virtual lobby days. Here's what's been happening:

VOTES Act—S2545/H.805

On October 13, the LWVMA, in partnership with Massachusetts Election Modernization Coalition, sponsored a Virtual Lobby Luncheon attended by several LWVCCA members. The VOTES Act has been passed in the State Senate and will proceed to the House. LWVMA Executive Director Pattye Comfort was a featured speaker at the Lobby Day and spoke about the advantages of Same Day Registration (SDR), along with other election specialists who reviewed the benefits of this major voting legislation, designed to make permanent the reforms of the 2020 election. Our members followed up with phone calls and e-mails to their state representatives, urging their support in the upcoming House vote—date TBA.

Parity on Boards-- H3157/S.2077

LWVCCA President Suzanne Brock—with input from Jeanne Morrison, Rosemary Shields, and Carole Young-Kleinfeld—submitted testimony to the Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight on An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions. Several of our members also submitted testimony as concerned individuals. Thanks to all who advocated for passage of this bill.

Suzanne noted that “Women comprise only 24% of board members on the most prominent public boards and commissions, with women of color comprising only 2%. Leadership positions for white women has increased to 44% but remains at 2% for women of color.

Some Cape schools have been experiencing ongoing problems with harsher treatment for their students of color. A more diverse leadership at the top may result in consistent policy change throughout the systems.

The time is overdue for Massachusetts to take a stand and codify a commitment to appointments that will bind the highest officeholder in the Commonwealth—our Governor--to a standard of 50% parity for women, no matter who holds the office. Although the Governor is the most prominent appointing authority in our state for public boards and commissions, there are many others, such as mayors, town councils, county authorities, and school authorities who must be held to a higher standard of diversity and inclusion.”

Anti-Racism and Justice in Education- - S.365/H.584

Susan Quinones submitted testimony on behalf of the LWVCCA, noting that our multi-racial democracy should be reflected in what is taught in our educational system. This bill is essential to counter past racial educational disparities and white-centric history by creating a Commission for Anti-Racism an Equity in education to work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a K-12 curriculum with a social justice perspective.

Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program —H.1428/S.898

Susan Quinones and Renate Sands submitted testimony on behalf of the LWVCCA and its Legislative Committee to support An Act Codifying the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program. MRVP has been in existence for more than three decades to assist those with the greatest need with their rents. This bill would codify the provisions of the MRVP with enhancements to ensure the program's sustainability, such as lowering of the rent share for voucher holders, distributing funds to eligible low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income households, requiring regular health and safety inspections of rental units, and rolling over

unspent funds into the program for the next fiscal year.

Halting ICE Agreements—H.1477

An Act Relative to Enforcing Federal Law would terminate the 287(g) agreement between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local sheriffs which currently allows local sheriffs to act as federal immigration enforcement agents to detain immigrants for civil—not criminal—infractions. LWVCCA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Renate Sands testified that, presently, only Barnstable County and the MA Department of Corrections have 287(g) programs. If this bill passes, it will prohibit them and any future sheriffs from participating in a program that has caused human rights abuses. In her testimony, Renate recounted disturbing personal observations of the 287(g) programs in action, when she taught ESL in a local high school.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, opposes deputizing state and local police to enforce federal immigration laws in Massachusetts. As of September 2021, only three other states besides Massachusetts are engaged with the federal government in the 287(g) program—Arizona, Georgia, and Florida

Monitoring Dry Casks of Spent Nuclear Fuel —H.2264/S1507

LWVCCA Voter Service Co-Chair Rosemary Shields was a guest speaker at a LWVMA, LWVCCA, and LWV Plymouth jointly-sponsored webinar on the decommissioning of the Pilgrim Nuclear Station.

Rosemary has contacted both Senator Cyr and Representative Peake to seek their help in moving this bill from the Joint Committee on Public Health to the Ways and Means Committee.

Other Events

- Oct 25** Legislative Committee Meeting 10 AM
- Oct 26** Hearing Medicare for All 11AM
- Oct 27** Day on the Hill 10:00 AM—Voting, the Climate Crisis, Early Education, and Healthcare

Nov 23 Hearing on Common Start Legislation
11:00 AM

Submitted by Renate Sands and
Carole Young-Kleinfeld,
Co-Chairs, LWVCCA Legislative Committee

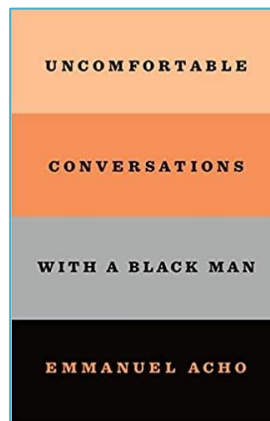
DEI COMMITTEE REPORT

LWVCCA Discussions of Emmanuel Acho’s Book: Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man

“[We] have to continue with uncomfortability until we are uncomfortable no more.”

LWVCCA, and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee are committed to increasing our reach and relevance in under-served and minority communities on Cape Cod. To do so, we are working to raise our awareness and understanding of racism on both the personal and organizational levels. As part of this effort, LWVCCA decided to hold book discussions focused on anti-racism.

Discussions of *Conversations with a Black Man* -- we reported previously on the planning -- took place in October in two sessions with five groups, each including at least two women of color. Evaluation surveys were emailed to the 33 participants after their second discussion sessions; 24 were returned, for a good response rate of 73%.



The evaluation survey asked 10 questions. Questions 1 – 9 were *Yes/No* or *Yes/No/Sometimes* with a *Comments* field and addressed key issues in Acho’s book, including understanding of racism (individual and systemic), the experiences of Black people, the historical and other issues fostering racism. Question 10 was an open-ended question asking generally about further learning and the discussion format.

Question 10 had 17 responses, all of which were positive about participating in additional learning and about the discussion format and moderators. Below are some representative quotations from the evaluation, in addition to the one at the top of this report.

"Acho did a great job of bringing a range of examples, from his own experiences growing up in a prosperous middle-class environment to the experiences of others less prosperous. There is racism at every turn for every Black person."

"I liked how the book clarified my thinking: Prejudice is an emotional commitment to ignorance. The number one goal is to stop being ignorant. Realize cultural appropriation. It never occurred to me that the term "plantation shutters" would be offensive. And there is no such thing as reverse racism. Black people don't have the power to be racist."

"I appreciated hearing from those women in the group from various nations about the differing viewpoints about the history/results of U.S. enslavement of black people. Actually, this perspective came from the group, not so much from the book."

The committee will be reviewing all of the responses and adding information from interviews of the facilitators about their assessment of the discussions. A full report will be submitted for Board review and, upon Board approval, published in *The Voter* and the website.

The Constitution Project

Mati has received the books and is preparing them for distribution.

Quarterly Meeting

The full committee met via Zoom on October 22. We discussed the book project (see above). A small subcommittee will be planning the next one or two books for discussion during the winter, focusing on next steps.

Committee members who serve on other LWVCCA committees will be contacting those committees to discuss DEI goals within their planned programs for 2021-2022.

Submitted by Mary Hunter Utt and Mati Ligon,
Co-chairs, LWVCCA DEI Committee


VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

On Friday, October 15 the Unitarian Church of Barnstable invited the League to their monthly "Stand Out for Racial Justice" event. This month the emphasis was to get out the vote for the Barnstable November 2nd election. It was an enthusiastic and dedicated group who showed up. Besides co-chairs of the Voter Service Committee, Anita Rogers and Rosemary Shields, League members Renate Sands, Jeanne Morrison and Maureen Grandmont joined in. One of the leaders of the Unitarian Church, Joanne, gave a quick run through on how to use the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website (<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/>), where you can find out if you are registered to vote, find your polling place, instructions on voting by mail in 2021 and how to track your ballot. She then said they could get specific precinct and candidate information at the Town of Barnstable website (<https://town.barnstable.ma.us/>). This was, of course, exactly the same remarks the Voter Service co-chairs were planning to give. How coincidental. How mortifying! Luckily, they also had findings from a Stanford University study they could share. The study showed that more voters are motivated to go to the voting booths when:

1. they are told turnout will be high
2. they are encouraged to discuss their plans for getting to the polls
3. they know there will be follow-up, personal accountability
4. they are encouraged to see voting as an intrinsic part of their identity, using the noun: "I am a voter," vs. the verb "I vote."

Non-presidential, local elections are notoriously low-turnout events, so that first angle could not be used. But having a plan, helping 3 of your friends

or neighbors to vote and following up on how the voting went is something *everyone* can do. So, Voter Service passed out their Share Your Plan to Vote cards:



SHARE YOUR PLAN TO VOTE

I will vote on Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at _____ (time)

I will be voting (in-person / by-mail)

I am going to remind (3 people I care about):

I'm most excited to vote for (candidate):

Source: SisterDistrictProject.com

Voting rights for the incarcerated:

There are between 7,000 to 9,000 citizens in Massachusetts serving time for misdemeanors, or who are incarcerated while awaiting trial (held in jail because they cannot afford bail), who have the right to vote but cannot exercise it. These eligible voters often do not know they are eligible to vote and cannot access absentee ballots or informational materials about the candidates. Those few who can access absentee ballot applications often find that, for a variety of reasons, their ballots are erroneously rejected. Advocates refer to this as *de-facto* or jail-based disenfranchisement. Since before the 2020 election, a subcommittee of the Voter Service committee led by Anita Rogers has been working with the Barnstable County Correctional Facility and the Sheriff's office to make sure ballots are available to those incarcerated, waiting for trial and not yet convicted. The state Senate recently demonstrated a commitment to racial and political equality, by adopting an amendment to end the '*de facto*' disenfranchisement of eligible incarcerated voters filed by Sen. Adam Hinds, and passing it as part of the VOTES Act. Leaders in the state House

have already demonstrated their support for making only mail-in voting and expanded early voting permanent this session. We need to contact our state Representatives that we are in support of the FULL Senate version of the VOTES Act.

Did you know that only 20 years ago, Mass. took the right to vote away from anyone serving a felony conviction after Gov. Cellucci's petition to pass felony disenfranchisement on the ballot succeeded. On November 7, 2000 Massachusetts residents voted on Ballot Question 2 to amend Article III of the state constitution to prohibit people incarcerated for felonies in state prison from voting. People incarcerated across the state voted in large numbers, however the amendment passed the final stage with 60.3% yeas, 33.9% nays and 5.8% of people not voting on the question. The amendment only applies to elections governed by the state constitution – governor, lieutenant governor, and U.S. senators and representatives – but not municipal or presidential elections

Source:
<https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2021/10/18/voting-reforms-disenfranchised-incarcerated-kristina-mensik>

Redistricting:

Well, it looks like the Joint Committee on Redistricting took our testimony seriously and modified the town of Barnstable from 3 state Representative districts into 2. As Beth Huang said, quoted below: "Often we wonder, is it worth it to testify? Is it worth it to show up? And the answer is yes."

Massachusetts lawmakers on Tuesday October 19th, moved to reshape their proposed map of state legislative lines to carve out a new Brockton-based state Senate district where the majority of residents would be people of color.

The redrawn seat south of Boston marks the biggest pivot among House and Senate districts from what lawmakers initially unveiled last week as part of the decennial redistricting process. The initial plan for State Senate Districts used Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) figures rather than straight Census population figures. Their reversal

also represents a major victory for advocacy groups who argued that the original Senate proposal would dilute the political power of minority residents in Brockton, New England's only majority-Black city.

The Drawing Democracy Coalition argued this week that lawmakers may have violated voting rights law by not drawing a majority-minority Senate district based around Brockton, whose entire State House delegation is white. But by now reshaping the lines, the Senate map would double the number of majority-minority districts in the 40-member Senate chamber from three to six. The other two, featured in the original plan, include Lawrence and a combination of Chelsea, Everett, Charlestown, and Cambridge.

Often we wonder, is it worth it to testify? Is it worth it to show up? And the answer is yes, said Beth Huang, executive director of the Massachusetts Voter Table and a convener of the Drawing Democracy Coalition. "How Randolph and Brockton are represented will be major signals for how I think all people of color are represented. That's why we had such a big focus on those communities. Having a district that causes elected officials to be responsive and accountable to residents of color is important to the State House agenda."

House and Senate leaders said they drew them with the goal of amplifying the political voice of people of color in the communities where their ranks have grown the most over the past decade: largely in the Boston area, but also in Worcester, Springfield, and Lawrence, a Latino-majority city of immigrants in the Merrimack Valley.

History shows that drawing majority-minority districts — particularly when no single ethnic group makes up more than 50 percent of a district's population — does not always empower communities of color to elect candidates of color, nor does it ensure that the legislative body will grow more diverse.

But advocates emphasize that fair maps are necessary, even if not sufficient, for ensuring communities of color secure political

representation and for providing candidates of color the chance to break into an old-school political system where insiders reign and most insiders are white.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/10/19/metro/under-pressure-state-senate-redraws-map-adding-new-majority-minority-district-brockton/?event=event25>

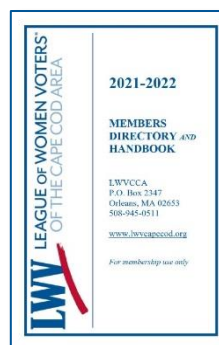
A further explanation of the use of CVAP vs. straight Census population figures:

(Drawing Democracy Coalition 's) primary concern was with the Senate's initial use of Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) to build majority-minority districts. CVAP leaves out large segments of the population, especially young people and immigrants, thus weakening long-term opportunities for building political power. It is not typically used for redistricting in other states and was not used to conduct redistricting in Massachusetts in 2011.

As a result, we believe the proposed Senate maps fell short for BIPOC and immigrant communities in Brockton, Haverhill and Boston. On the House side, we were pleased that, by using total population as a guide, the proposed map increased the number of majority-minority districts to 33 (from 20).

You can read more about the drawbacks of using CVAP in this Boston Globe editorial: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/10/15/opinion/house-takes-long-view-redistricting/>

Submitted by Anita Rogers and Rosemary Shields, *Co-chairs, LWVCCA Voter Service Committee*



2021-22 MEMBERS HANDBOOK *and* DIRECTORY

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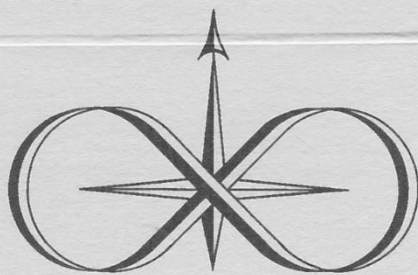


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Jon Vaughan

A gallery with a different point of view

