



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 19, 2023  
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**Book Discussion and Signing—  
*In Other Words, Leadership:*  
*How a New England Governor and a Rural Mother Connected during COVID*  
July 14, 2023**

Barnstable – The League of Women Voters of Cape Cod Area sponsors a discussion with the author, Shannon Mullen, on her new book—*In Other Words, Leadership*—highlighting the compelling correspondence of Maine Governor Janet Mills and a young rural mother who reached out to her during the first year of COVID.

The discussion is set for Friday July 14, 2023, at the Olde Colonial Courthouse, 3046 Main Street, Barnstable 02630, from 7—9pm including refreshments afterwards.

As the first woman to serve as governor of Maine, Janet Mills, had been in office a year when COVID-19 reached the U.S. The recently-widowed 72-year-old journaled there is “no playbook for a pandemic” as she imposed unprecedented restrictions on her state.

When early support for the governor’s response curdled to rampant opposition, a young mother—Ashirah Knapp—sent a letter of support from a remote homestead in the Maine woods. Her dispatch detailed how the public health emergency was upending her family’s life and livelihood, and she promised to keep writing every week to remind the governor how many Mainers supported her despite the disruption. Ashirah’s letters helped keep the Governor grounded as she made wrenching, often unpopular choices.

Shannon A. Mullen is an NPR journalist, author, screenwriter, playwright, podcast host and film producer, who has been telling stories in one form or another since childhood. She grew up in New Hampshire and cherished summers with her aunt, Nancy Erskine, longtime activist and philanthropist in Chatham on the Cape.



Her book, just released on June 20, 2023, is just such a story and has drawn much interest at events from Washington across New England, including a recent feature in *The Boston Globe*: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/06/14/opinion/letters-time-pandemic/>.

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**About the League:** Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters has helped millions of women and men become informed participants in government. Today, LWV continues to be a respected and trusted voice for citizen participation in our democracy.

The League of Women Voters presents unbiased, nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process and issues. We sponsor forums and discussions and encourage voter registration.