

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LEXINGTON

BULLETIN, April, 2026

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Greetings from the Convener's Desk,

Dear League Members,

Bulletin. I want to flag to your attention the lawsuit against President Trump just filed by the **League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, in coalition with the national League and other voting rights organizations**, which is featured below in the **LWVMA Advocacy** section. You will receive an email from the LWVMA requesting a survey response to this action. I have already filled mine out, and I hope you will do the same.

Suffs Performance. On March 19, several local Leaguers joined some 200 other members from Massachusetts in attending a performance of "Suffs," the musical telling of the US Women's Suffragist movement. An all-female cast sang and danced and told the story of many of the heroines of the movement, from Cary Chapman Catt to Alice Paul. While I knew some of the story, there was one person I had not heard of, Inez Milholland. In 1913, she led the dramatic Woman Suffrage Procession on horseback in advance of President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration as a symbolic herald. She was a leading advocate for women's vote, and unfortunately died at age 30 from pernicious anemia. Look her up if you want more information about her.



Attend Burlington ICE Actions

Bearing Witness stands in solidarity outside the ICE Operations Office in Burlington every Wednesday from 11:00 pm to 1:00 pm, and other organizations lead the charge every Thursday 11:00 pm to 1:00 pm. The League is not an official sponsor of this event but encourages attendance.

New Members. I want to welcome new members **Katherine Riester** and **Meghan Caldera**.

League Dues Several members have asked about renewing their League dues. I see that some of you have paid, and want to thank you. If you receive an email reminding you to pay dues, please do. If you still want to write a check, let me know and I will find out how to do that (We were assured that was still possible!). You will receive a notice from LWVUS about dues, I received mine in December, but I think a number of our members had a renewal date of January 31 so should be getting a notice. But don't panic. You are still members of the League! If by the end of 2026 you have not received a notice, let me know and I will work with you to figure it out.

Margaret Coppe
Convenor

LEXINGTON LEAGUE FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, MAY 1, 2026: **GUN SAFETY LAWS ON THE MA BALLOT**

No First Friday Forum was scheduled for April, as Good Friday fell on the first Friday in April this year.

The LWVLex May First Friday Forum will be held on May 1, 2026, in Room 237 at the Lexington Community Center, from 9:30 – 11:00 am. Speakers will be Ruth Zakarin, CEO of the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence and chair of Vote Yes for a Safe Massachusetts, and Jennifer Muroff, the Legislative Action Committee Chair for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA).

We will learn about the November ballot initiative question on Gun Safety Laws, supported by the League, which will appear on the November ballot. The initiative asks voters to support the existing gun safety laws that are on the books in Massachusetts and urges a "Yes" vote on this question.



Ruth Zakarin



Jen Muroff

Ruth Zakarin became the Executive Director of the Coalition in May of 2019, after over 20 years working with youth and adults impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Since its 2012 founding, shortly after the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary school, the Coalition has brought together stakeholders from across the Commonwealth to address all forms of gun violence. The volunteer Coalition members worked to build grassroots energy that galvanized the State Legislature to pass the 2014 Omnibus gun safety bill, the 2018 Extreme Risk Protection Order law, and the 2024 Act Modernizing Firearms Laws, which is being challenged by the November 2026 ballot referendum.

Beyond advocating for the passage of this important legislation, the Coalition has worked with legislators and public health experts to implement these laws and to push for funding of programs that support youth opportunity, including Summer Youth jobs programs and the Safe and Secure Youth Initiative supporting violence intervention across the Commonwealth. Because gun violence is a complex problem requiring multi-faceted solutions, the Coalition, now with over 120 members, continues to grow and evolve to better serve the Commonwealth. Mass Action is the 501(c)(4) advocacy arm of the Coalition.

Jen joined LWVMA in 2017 as the legislative specialist advocating for immigrants' rights and gun violence prevention--for which she received a Commonwealth Heroine Award in 2019. Her advocacy work includes campaigns for Driving Families Forward, Extreme Risk Protection Order, Yes on 3 Transgender Rights Ballot Question, the Safe Communities Act, and more. She has protested peacefully for abortion rights at the US Supreme Court and against the mistreatment of migrant teens at the Homestead Detention Center in Florida. Jennifer has served as the Legislative Action Committee Chair and board member of the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence. Previously, Jennifer was a board member of the League of Women Voters of Needham where she helped incarcerated people from the Norfolk County House of Corrections vote.

This program is the eighth in the 2025-2026 LWV First Friday Forum series hosted by the Lexington League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Lex Media will record the program for future viewing. As always, the League forum is free and open to the public, and there will be time for questions and answers from the public. For more information about the League and this program go to:

<https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/lexington>.

LEXINGTON LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING

The Lexington LWV Board has voted to schedule the date of the League's Annual Meeting in September rather than in June so that it will coincide with the start of the League's year. This will allow us to hold our business meeting and elections for League positions at the beginning of our year, and to map out the coming year's program after input from the state and national conventions/councils held in alternate years in June. Stay tuned for information on the Lexington LWV Annual Meeting program as it becomes available. .

OF INTEREST

The Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, at 33 Marrett Road, is hosting an Open House and 50th Anniversary Celebration from **April 4 through April 11, 2026**.

The celebration highlights a runner completing a 333-mile journey across American Revolutionary sites from Delaware to Massachusetts to raise funds for the Museum and Library.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA ADVOCACY

LWVMA LEADS SUIT CHALLENGING EXECUTIVE ORDER ON MAIL-IN VOTING

On **March 31, President Trump signed an executive order concerning mail-in voting**, which attempts to displace states' mail-in voting laws by transforming the US Postal Service from a neutral mail carrier to an arbiter of who may cast a ballot by mail. The order requires the federal Department of Homeland Security to build and give to each state a list of citizens eligible to vote which will be used to prevent the USPS from delivering ballots to anyone not on the list. Given that federal databases are out-of-date and unreliable, this risks mass disenfranchisement of eligible voters.

On April 3, a coalition of voting rights organizations, led by the LWVMA, filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts challenging the executive order. The Constitution explicitly states that only Congress and the states can set the rules for elections.

The suit was filed by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, the League of Women Voters, Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), US Vote Foundation, OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA), and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

They are represented by the **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), ACLU of Massachusetts**, Brennan Center for Justice, Legal Defense Fund (LDF), Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), and LatinoJustice PRLDEF. The plaintiffs and their counsel released the following statement:

"This executive order is an illegal and dangerous attempt by the Trump administration to eliminate accessible voting options and subvert our democracy by seizing control of election administration from the states and Congress. If implemented, it would disenfranchise eligible voters across the nation.

"Attempts to end voting by mail are part of the Trump administration's larger strategy to undermine elections and subvert the will of the people. The US Constitution is clear: the states and Congress — not the president — set the rules for our elections. President Trump tried to make an end-run around the Constitution with another executive order last year and was promptly rebuffed by multiple courts. History will repeat itself.

"This executive order would up-end countless state laws and procedures regarding mail-in voting. It could deny eligible voters, including voters with disabilities, US citizens living abroad, and military members and their family members, the right to vote by mail — and unknown numbers will be disenfranchised without that option. Far from improving elections, this executive order would create chaos for election officials, erode public confidence in our elections, and block Americans from exercising their most fundamental right and responsibility as citizens — voting. By taking the administration to court, we are standing up for the rule of law and the promise of our democracy."

LWVMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TESTIFIES ON BEACON HILL IN SUPPORT OF ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION BALLOT QUESTION

On March 31, LWVMA Executive Director Celia Canavan testified before the Massachusetts Joint Special Committee on Initiative Petitions in support of the Election Day Registration ballot question, along with other partners and advocates. She said, in part:

Considering the SAVE Act's strict identification requirements, election day registration would not only be a good policy change, but could become the only avenue to ensure thousands of women across the commonwealth can exercise their right to vote. EDR is not just a voting rights issue, it's a women's rights issue. Massachusetts Women cannot afford to wait and see how the SAVE Act and its related anti-voter measures will impact their ability to vote in the Bay State. We need EDR now."

State lawmakers have until early May to move on this proposal, and if they choose not to pass it, the question will be subject to another round of certification before being officially placed on the ballot.

Executive Director Canavan reminds us that today's public issues require all of us to get involved:

*The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has always been a leader in protecting your right to vote: and we continue to fight **all** of our battles, both the big and small ones, the glamorous ones and the "boring" ones, because we remember what life was like for women before the 19th Amendment, and before the Voting Rights Act.*

We remember the bloody battles, the hunger strikes, the assaults. We remember those who lost their lives fighting for our right to vote, those who fought knowing they would never see the day their great granddaughters would make it to the ballot box. We fight

because, as our late President Lotte Scharfman famously said, "Democracy is not a spectator sport." – and we will not be forced back into the sidelines.

MA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED THE PROTECT ACT WHICH NOW GOES TO THE SENATE

The Massachusetts House of Representatives has passed the **PROTECT Act, H.5305, An Act promoting the rule of law, oversight, trust, and equal constitutional treatment**. The Act bans new 287(g) agreements for cooperation between local governments and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); prohibits informal collaboration with ICE, and ensures safety in the courts. This legislation is in accord with Governor Maura Healey's recent executive order which prohibits the state from entering into any new agreements to cooperate with ICE in its operations under section 287(g) of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act unless there is a specific and certified public safety risk or need. It prohibits ICE from making civil arrests in non-public areas of state facilities, and prohibiting the use of state property for immigration enforcement staging.

LWVMA has supported measures in this critically urgent immigrants' rights legislation since 2017. This was truly a Herculean effort by the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus, the Committee on Public Safety and Security and House leadership.

Thank you to every League member who met with, called, e-mailed, texted, and championed these protections with their legislators for almost a decade. Today, we celebrate. Tomorrow, we get back to work: The bill is now headed to the Senate.

REMINDER: LWVMA POSITIONS ON 2026 BALLOT QUESTIONS

The LWVMA Board votes to support, oppose, or take no position on specific ballot questions based on positions or goals previously researched and adopted by the League. As a nonpartisan political organization, LWVMA does not endorse political parties or candidates, but does advocate for issues that the organization has studied and taken a position on, based on consensus from members. League members may participate in Yes campaigns for ballot questions that the Board has voted to support, and No campaigns for ballot questions that the Board has voted to oppose

LWVMA supports the following Ballot Questions.

- #Election Day Registration,
- #Law to Improve Access to Public Records,
- #Zoning of Single-Family Homes, and
- #Rejection of repeal of firearms laws passed in the last legislative session.

LWVMA opposes the following Ballot Questions.

#Limiting State Tax Collection Growth and Returning Surpluses to Taxpayers,
#Reducing the State Personal Income Tax Rate from 5% to 4%.

LWVMA takes no position on the following Ballot Questions.

#Implement All-Party State Primaries “Top 2,”
#Act to reform and regulate legislative stipends*,
#Nature for All Fund,
#Protect Tenants by Limiting Rent Increases,
#Labor Relations Policies for Committee for Public Counsel Services Employees,
and #Recriminalize marijuana.

The legislature may choose to act on the petitions by May 5. If they take no action on a petition, another 12,429 additional signatures are required by June 17. The ballot questions submitted for the November 3, 2026 election do not become official until July. More detail on the League’s positions on each of the Ballot Questions can be found at <https://lwmva.org/lwmva-statement-on-2026-ballot-questions/Positions>.

*This ballot question was presented at the LWVLex First Friday in November, 2025 by our former Representative Jay Kaufman, one of its sponsors. It can be found on the LWVLex website: my.lwv.org/massachusetts/lexington

LWVMA EVENTS

DEMYSTIFYING THE STATE BUDGET AN LWVMA WEBINAR ON YOUTUBE

A recording of the League’s virtual program, “Demystifying the State Budget,” featuring **Elizabeth Lutts, Policy & Budget Advisor for State Senator Patricia Jehlen**, is available for those of you who may have missed it on line in March. You can find it on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G81IFv7HkkY>.

Community Advisors Still Needed for 2026 MA Spring Civics Showcases

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Generation Citizen are once again collaborating to host four Statewide Civics Project Showcases across the Commonwealth in 2026:

- Springfield: MassMutual Center, Tuesday, May 26
- Dartmouth: UMass Dartmouth, Friday, May 29

- Worcester: DCU Center, Monday, June 1
- Boston: Edward M. Kennedy Institute, Friday, June 5

At each Showcase, volunteer Community Advisors have short conversations with students about their projects, asking questions and offering feedback based on their own expertise. Projects address a wide range in project topics; advisors come from diverse backgrounds: community organizers, legislators, business and non-profit leaders, educators, healthcare workers, and more. This is an interesting opportunity tailor-made for League members.

Register as a Community Advisor at:

https://generationcitizen.rsvpify.com/MACivicsShowcase?utm_source=Civics%20Monthly%20Memo&utm_campaign=47f9111c99-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_08_25_04_20_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7e599155c7-577457987

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF UNITED STATES

LWVUS EVENTS

REMINDER:

57TH BIENNIAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NATIONAL CONVENTION, JUNE 25-28, 2026



The LWVUS 57th Biennial National Convention will take place in Columbus, Ohio, June 25-28, 2026. Attendance may be in person or virtually for this multi-day event where League members from across the country come together to network, learn, and chart the course for the next biennium.

National Convention is a League experience unlike any other, as delegates representing state and local Leagues across the country vote on the nominees for LWVUS Board of Directors and Nominating Committee, as well as on bylaws amendments, budget, and League priorities. In addition to plenary sessions, Convention also includes dynamic

presentations, practical trainings, and inspiring content that support our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

In-person attendees will have full access to plenary sessions, trainings, and networking opportunities. Virtual attendees can fully participate in live-streamed plenary sessions from anywhere. Check out [LWV.org](https://www.lwv.org) for details about the registration process, the event hotel, and more. Information on Pre-Convention trainings, breakout sessions, and confirmed speakers will be available in the coming months. This is your chance to help shape the future of our League and connect with fellow changemakers. Mark your calendar and get ready to be inspired!

LWVUS ADVOCACY

LWVUS SELECTS ARTWORK FROM NATIVE ARTIST TO REPRESENT ITS UNITE AND RISE 8.5 CAMPAIGN



LWVUS has commissioned artwork from Native American artist Andrea Pippins to represent its ongoing **Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative** to mobilize 8.5 million voters between now and the midterm elections in November.

Since the Trump administration took office in January 2025, we've seen increased attacks on our democratic systems and a failure by Congress to intervene.

On May 1, 2025, LWV launched this initiative, which aims to mobilize 8.5 million voters, using the power of voter engagement as a cornerstone of our democracy. **Unite and Rise 8.5** showcases the many ways voters can drive change through advocacy, mobilization, civic education, and engagement.

8.5 million is the estimated number of voters the League seeks to activate to combat an authoritarian takeover attempt through nonprofit protest and civic activism. A Harvard study from the Carr-Ryan Center for Human Rights found that: "Nonviolent protests are twice as likely to succeed as armed conflicts...and those engaging a threshold of 3.5% of the population have never failed to bring about change." According to the University of Florida, approximately 245 million Americans were eligible to vote in the 2024 general election. If

3.5% of these eligible voters — 8,575,000 people — engage in nonviolent protest and civic activism, the League believes we will be able to bring about meaningful change.

The initiative addresses challenges to democracy in the following areas:

- **Legal & Policy Advocacy:** Challenges unconstitutional actions through litigation, advocate for electoral integrity reforms at state and federal levels, fight voter suppression, and protect due process
- **Public Mobilization & Coalition Building:** Turns out millions for quick activations and longer-planned activist campaigns, uplift local voices, and partner with grassroots, national, and international organizations
- **Civic Education & Engagement:** Launches large-scale public awareness campaigns, expands voter registration and turnout efforts, hosts educational forums, connects policy to real-life impact, and equips people with strategies to act.
- **Democracy Resilience:** Builds lasting infrastructure to protect democratic values and institutions for the long haul.

For more information, go to www.lwv.org.

LWVUS “GRASSROOTS” FUND RAISING



As one of the nation’s oldest grassroots voting rights organizations, the League of Women Voters is mobilizing now to defend the freedom to vote and ensure every voice is heard during the 2026 midterm election season.

League members power our efforts to defend democracy and fight attacks on voting rights, making it possible for voters to cast their ballots and have them counted.

[As a thank-you for a gift of \\$26 or more, you’ll receive a limited-edition League yard sign that shows you are an advocate for voting rights.](#) Your gift will fund our **Unite and Rise 8.5** initiative to mobilize 8.5 million people for the midterm election season, fuel voter registration drives across the country, and help counter mis- and disinformation designed to mislead voters. You’ll also help fund VOTE411.org, our one-stop-shop for nonpartisan election information, such as state voter registration deadlines and how to get an absentee ballot.

To donate and receive your sign, go to www.lwv.org. Please allow 10 weeks for delivery.

SAVE AMERICA ACT, SAVE ACT AND MAKE ELECTIONS GREAT AGAIN ACT ARE PENDING IN THE SENATE

The national League is requesting financial support to help in its opposition to the *SAVE America Act*, the *SAVE Act*, and the *Make Elections Great Again Act*, and has issued the following statement:

The *SAVE America Act* will soon get a vote in the Senate. LWVUS continues to stand against any and all attempts to make voting harder for eligible citizens, whether by Congress or the current Administration.

This dangerous, anti-democratic bill will disproportionately harm:

- **Women who changed their names after marriage** — who would have to secure updated documentation to register to vote;
- **Military families** — who would have to re-register every time they move sometimes very close to an election day;
- **Disaster survivors** — who may have lost documents in disasters and face burdensome hurdles to replace them while rebuilding their lives; and
- **Communities of color** — Black Americans are three times more likely than white citizens to lack easy access to birth certificates, passports, or naturalization papers.

It will also weaken the *National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993*, a law that expanded access to voter registration. We worked for years with legislators to pass the NVRA, and we cannot let this groundbreaking law be dismantled, harming millions of voters. As guardians of voters' rights, **we** will not stay silent while the *SAVE Act* threatens our essential right to vote— the very foundation of our democratic process. Please contact your senators to stress the importance of defeating this legislation,

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SAVE THE DATE

April 4-11, 2026 Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library Open House, 9:00 am-4:00 pm, 33 Marrett Road

May 1, 2026, LWVLex First Friday, Gun Legislation, 9:30 am, Community Center

May 26 - June, 5, 2026 2026 Mass Spring Civics Showcases, Springfield; Dartmouth; Worcester; Boston.

June 25-28, 2026 LWVUS national biennial convention, Columbus, Ohio and on zoom

September, 2026 LWVLex Annual Meeting, time and place to be announced

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you would like to submit an article for the May 2026 Lexington LWV Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com by April 30, 2026.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization dedicated to the principles of self-government established in the Constitution of the United States. The League works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. For more information, contact the League convener Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com.

