



BULLETIN, December, 2024

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Greetings from the Convener's Desk

As we approach the end of 2024, there is time for reviewing the successes as well as the losses of the year.

Passage of the Climate Bill, under the guidance of Senator Mike Barrett, by the state legislature marked a significant win for the environment. There is still more work to be done, but we are grateful for the win.

On the federal level, although there was a deep level of disappointment at the outcome of the election, the LWVUS issued a statement acknowledging the dedicated work of poll workers, election officials and volunteers across the country, and especially the efforts of

On the local level, we are heading into local elections in March.

If you are thinking about running for office, you have a few more weeks to obtain the papers and get signatures and return them.

Candidates Night will be Thursday, February 13, 2025 at Clarke Middle School. I will be looking for volunteers for the precinct meetings and for the town-wide session. Please consider offering to help, it is fun and informative and appreciated.

Happy Holidays!

Margaret Coppe
Convener

REMINDER: LEXINGTON LWV DECEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM: LEGISLATORS' UPDATE AT THE TERM'S END



Senator Cindy Friedman



Representative Michelle Ciccolo

On **Friday, December 6, 2024**, the Lexington LWV will hold its **First Friday Forum at 9:30 am at the Community Center Dining Room**. **Senator Cindy Friedman**, Fourth Middlesex, and **Representative Michelle Ciccolo** 15 Middlesex, will be the featured speakers.

This is a chance to hear firsthand what our legislators have been working on on Beacon Hill over the two-year legislative term that ends this December, and to ask questions about the progress of legislation you (and the League) care about. Informal sessions of the Massachusetts Legislature continue through December 31, and according to House Speaker Ronald Mariano, conference committees are working to reach consensus on compromise reports despite the end of formal session July 31.

This program is the second in the 2024-2025 LWV First Friday Forum series hosted by the Lexington League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. As always, the program is free and open to the public, and there will be time for questions and answers. LexMedia will record the presentation for future viewing. For more information about the League and this program go to <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts.lexington>.

LEXINGTON LWV JANUARY FIRST FRIDAY FORUM: A GET-ACQUAINTED SESSION WITH OUR NEW TOWN MANAGER

Now that the federal and state elections are over, the Lexington League is focusing on the local. We are getting off to a strong start in 2025 with an informal get-acquainted meeting with our new Town Manager, who began his work in Lexington on November 1, 2024. On **January 3, 2025, at the Lexington Community Center, Room 237**, we will be pleased to host **Steve Bartha**, for questions and conversation.

Mr. Bartha most recently served for a decade as the Danvers Town Manager. Currently, he is one of three Northeast Regional Vice Presidents on the International City/County

Management Association. He is a past president of both the Massachusetts and Connecticut Municipal Management Associations.

A native of northern Michigan, Mr. Bartha graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in political theory and constitutional democracy. He then spent two years teaching high school English in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with Teach for America before earning his Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Connecticut with a concentration in Public Finance.

He is married to Dr. Elena Forzani, an Assistant Professor in Literacy Education at Boston University's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development, and enjoys being the father of 11-year-old Giuliana and 7-year-old Jack.

This program is the third in the 2024-2025 LWV First Friday Forum series hosted by the Lexington League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. There will be time for questions and answers. As always, the program is free and open to the public, and Lex Media will record it for later viewing. For more information about the League and this program go to <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts.lexington>.

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 League Convenor Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

“UNFILTERED VOICES” - DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN A CHANGING WORLD

LWVMA is hosting a **zoom meeting on December 11 at 6:00 pm**: entitled: **Unfiltered Voices: A Conversation on DEI in a Changing World**. This candid discussion will feature a panel of women of color sharing their personal experiences navigating professional life, the unique challenges they face, and the importance of integrating DEI into organizational programming. It will also explore strategies for having difficult conversations with allies and the impact of societal pressures on mental health.

Please note, the views shared during this conversation reflect those of the individual panelists and not the organizations, institutions, or groups with which they may be affiliated. To foster open conversation, audience questions will not be taken during this session. However, there will be opportunities to engage with the panelists during a future event.

LWVMA REPARATIONS STUDY COMMITTEE PREPARES FOR LOCAL CONSENSUS MEETINGS

LWV Consensus Procedure

The League of Women Voters, as is well known, does not support or oppose individual candidates or parties, remaining strictly non-partisan. However, the League, after appropriate study and discussion, does take positions on issues, and over the years has established a substantial body of policy positions, in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>

At its annual League gatherings, members may propose amendments to existing policies or direct the national or state boards to conduct studies on new topics. No new position is adopted without a **formal research and study process** and subsequent presentation to the full membership at **local “consensus meetings.”** These meetings are intended for frank and thorough discussion, with a goal of reaching a general consensus position in each meeting. They are not debates where one side wins or loses, but rather an attempt to find whatever common ground there may be among the League membership represented. The results of all local meetings are then reported back to the state or national League (whichever body has conducted the particular study). Sometimes a broad consensus position is reached, and other times a partial consensus on particular aspects of the question presented. If a consensus is reached at the state level, that position is submitted to the national League of Women Voters, which may then decide to broaden the process to include Leagues across the country.

LWVMA Study and Consensus Procedure on Reparations for Black Americans

At its Annual Meeting in June, 2023, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, at the original instigation of the Amherst League, voted to conduct a **study on the issue of reparations for Black Americans**. That study has been conducted over the past year by a board-appointed committee, which has completed its work and distributed study and discussion materials to all Leagues in Massachusetts.

The Lexington League will be conducting formal consensus meetings, open to all League members, in February, 2025. In the mean time we want to make

the materials assembled in the League study, as well as reading lists and other media, available to all our members for review and consideration. One of the major benefits of this process is to provide an opportunity to broaden our knowledge and understanding of an issue, even if not everyone chooses to participate in formal discussions.

Group Discussions on Zoom

The LWVMA Reparations Study Committee has scheduled two more small group discussions on this topic on December 12 and January 7 on Zoom. Facilitated by Debra Dagwan and Jeffrey Gold, the discussions are centered on Ta-Nehisi Coates' foundational essay, "The Case for Reparations." They offer the opportunity for League members to familiarize themselves with the concept of reparations as a path to restorative justice, and explore an American history not typically addressed in public forums. Each discussion is a "one and done" experience, meant to engage the participants in respectful and reflective listening.

Study and Procedure Materials Available

In addition, the Reparations Study Committee has prepared a **Study Guide** (<https://lwmma.org/lwmma-reparations-study/>) which sets out the framework of questions presented by this topic and summarizes the material contained in the full **Report**. The complexity of the subject is reflected in this abbreviated list of the questions:

- Why should reparations be provided? Or why not?
Should the LWVMA support educational campaigns to raise awareness of the harms caused by systemic racism in the US?
- Who should receive reparations?
Only descendants of Africans enslaved in the US?
All Black/African Americans living in the US?
- What reparations should be given?
Should payments be made in cash?
Should other benefits such as subsidized college tuition or land grants be used?
- How should reparations be provided?
By the federal or state or local governments?
By business enterprises?
By universities, faith-based groups, or other institutions?

- In light of the complexities of this topic and the strong views pro and con held by Americans across Massachusetts and the US, should the LWVMA take a position on reparations at this time?

A 20-minute video, "Overview of Study on Reparations for Black Americans" is available on the LWVMA web page at: [LWVMA Reparations Study for Black Americans, https://lwmma.org/lwmma-reparations-study/](https://lwmma.org/lwmma-reparations-study/).

As the Lexington League plans our participation in this study, we plan to reach out well beyond the Lexington LWV Board to involve as many of our members, and perhaps other members of the community, in our discussions. While only League members can register a vote toward a consensus position, all participants will be welcome at our meetings in February, 2025. Please take a look at the materials referenced above, and consider adding your voice to this important discussion.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS EVENTS

The League of Women Voters of the United States President Dianna Wynn and CEO Celina Stewart have released the following statement on the 2024 election results:

"The 2024 election underscores the dedication of poll workers, election officials, and volunteers nationwide, who ensured that every eligible vote was counted, and every voice was heard. This year's election was marked by integrity, transparency, and high turnout. The American people have spoken.

"While we celebrate a fair and secure election, the outcome of this election has made the future for women unclear.

"Given the disturbing rhetoric made during this election season, we are deeply concerned about challenges we may face, particularly regarding the issues that disproportionately affect women, from health care and reproductive rights to economic security and equal representation.

"We are thankful to Leagues across the country for their tremendous work supporting the election infrastructure and supporting voters, as well as every election worker and

democracy defender who guaranteed our fair and free voting process. We are thankful for the work they have done so far this cycle and the counting, curing, and certifying work that will take place in the weeks ahead.

“The League is dedicated to our mission of defending democracy. As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advocate for policies that uplift women and ensure equitable representation in all levels of government.”

SAVE THE DATE

December 6, 2024	First Friday Forum, Lexington Legislators 9:30 am, Community Center
December 11, 2024	DEI Panel, 6:00 pm, Zoom
December 12, 2024	Small group discussion of reparations 7:00-8:20 pm Zoom
January 3, 2025	First Friday Forum, Meet the Town Manager, 9:30 am, Community Center
January 7, 2025	Small group discussion of reparations 7:00-8:30 pm Zoom

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Contact Information for Legislators

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren

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Boston, MA 02203

(617) 565-3170

U.S. Senator Edward Markey

255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

202 224-2742

U.S. Representative Katherine Clark

2448 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

202 225-2836

Mailing addresses for MA legislators are all at

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MA Senator Michael Barrett

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MA Senator Cindy Friedman

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MA Representative Michelle Ciccolo

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MA Representative Ken Gordon

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you would like to submit an article for the January 2025 Lexington LWV Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com by December 30, 2024.

