



BULLETIN, February, 2025

LOCAL ELECTIONS MARCH 3 – VOTE!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Greetings from the Convenor's Desk

I want to take this opportunity to address the new membership system that LWVUS has implemented as of February 2025. I will try to explain how you will be affected by these changes going forward.

First: You will no longer renew your League membership through us, the local League. This means that you will not receive a letter in the USPS mail in the fall reminding you to renew membership. Instead, you will receive a renewal reminder directly from LWVUS by email. You will have two choices to renew: one on-line and, if that does not work for you, by check made out to LWVUS and sent to us at our PO Box, 233, Lexington. We will deposit it and inform LWVUS.

Second: The email renewal notice will list a recommended dues amount of \$75, but goes on to say you have the option of any amount over \$20. The Lexington League is recommending that you enter \$60 for your dues. 20% (which turns out to be more than we are currently paying for members) of your dues will be directly deposited in our account, eliminating the need for our treasurer to record and deposit checks and eventually pay a per-member-payment based on our membership count to national and state.

Third: There will no longer be a category for second household member. Our local League has long enrolled that category at \$25. Now those formerly identified as second household members will be listed as "members". You have the option of continuing to pay \$25 for the second person living in your household.

Fourth: There will be **Donations** button where you can make additional donations. These will go directly in their entirety into the Lexington League account.

Important to Note

Over the past weeks, you should have received an email prompting you to log into the member portal to activate your account in the LWV Portal Setting to "claim their membership" but you will not be asked to renew again until one year after our renewal date.

This is the message you should have received:

As a member of the League of Women Voters, you're invited to activate your account. Setting up your account is easy — and shouldn't take more than five minutes!

- **Update your profile:** *Confirm the information included in your profile is current. Our new platform allows members to add seasonal addresses with specific durations. Have a seasonal address? Be sure to update it!*
- **Fill out the Member Survey:** *Answering questions about yourself and your engagement with the League helps you get involved in the ways that you want.*

*The LWV portal also offers fast and easy access for you to renew your membership to your League. Fill out our online form for yourself, pay on behalf of another person (if you wish), and even add an additional contribution to your League! **Note:** You won't be asked to renew until your expiration date is coming up.*

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns. These changes may cause some confusion. We hope to avoid that, but realize some will occur and are prepared to help.

Convenor,

Margaret Coppe

REMINDER: LEXINGTON LEAGUE FEBRUARY FIRST FRIDAY FORUM: A DISCUSSION OF TURF v. GRASS FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS

On **February 7, 2025**, LWV Lexington will present a discussion of the merits (and perils) of installing artificial turf versus natural grass on Lexington's athletic fields. The forum will be held in **Room 237 of the Lexington Community Center, at 9:30 am**, with time for questions and answers. This topic is particularly pertinent as we anticipate installation of new fields in connection with the construction of the new Lexington High School.

This program is the fourth in the 2024-2025 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 LexMedia will record it for later viewing. For more information go to: <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts.lexington>.

LEXINGTON LWV CANDIDATES NIGHT FEBRUARY 13

Candidates Night, featuring all local candidates in the March 3 election, will be held at Clarke Middle School on Thursday, February 13. Precinct meetings will run from 7:15-7:45 pm and offer an opportunity to talk directly with Town Meeting Member candidates. At 8:00 pm everyone will convene to hear question and answer presentations from Select Board, Planning Board and School Committee candidates. Be an informed voter – be there!



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

MASSACHUSETTS MATERNAL HEALTH “MOMNIBUS” LAW

ZOOM FORUM ON FEBRUARY 25, 2025

The Cape Cod League is hosting a **zoom forum**: “The Massachusetts Maternal Health “Momnibus” Law: What It means for the Cape and Commonwealth” on **Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 6:30 PM**. It will explore the recently enacted Act promoting midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options.

This comprehensive legislation will overhaul maternal health practices in Massachusetts and expand coverage for midwifery, birth centers, doulas and treatment for postpartum depression, among several other initiatives.

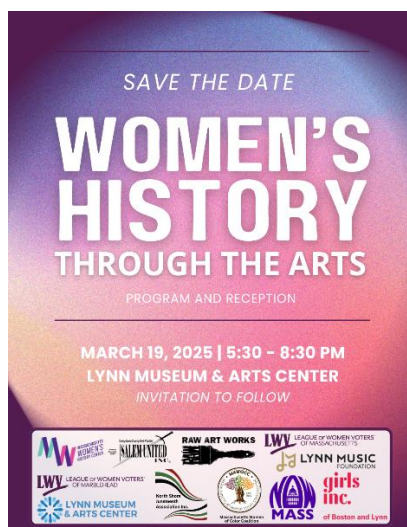
Five speakers will discuss the features of the new law from unique perspectives:

- Senator Elizabeth “Liz” Miranda, 2nd Suffolk District, Massachusetts Senate
- Dr. Hafsatou Diop, MD, MPH, MA Dept of Public Health—Assistant Commissioner for Health Equity
- Dr. William Agel, MD, Cape Cod Healthcare—Obstetrician/Gynecologist
- Erinn Bray, By Your Side Doula—Birth and Postpartum Doula
- Katherine Rushfirth, CNM, FACNM, Boston Neighborhood Health Center— Policy Director and Certified Nurse Midwife
- Jody Schwartz Belson, CNM, Outer Cape Health Services—Program Medical Director for Women’s Health Services, Certified Nurse Midwife

Register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtde2uqD8qGdHyUC1fUW5FI4vLUrCGcYy6#/registration>.

WOMEN'S HISTORY THROUGH THE ARTS MARCH 19 IN LYNN



LWVMA is planning a celebration of Women's History Month on March 19, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Lynn Museum and Arts Center. There will be a speaker, art on display, and a reception with light refreshments. Save the date!

KEEP IN MIND: STUDENT CIVICS PROJECTS SHOWCASES 2025

Each spring, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) celebrates the work of 8th–12th grade civics students across the state. Through "**science fair-style**" **showcases**, students have the opportunity to share their civics projects with local community advisors and each other, receive feedback on their work, and be recognized for their civic engagement.

In 2024, DESE hosted three regional Civics Project Showcases in Bridgewater, Worcester, and Amherst. Students from 70 schools participated across the three vents, showcasing projects on topics from the environment to educational equity to mental health.

This year, DESE will host four regional Civics Project Showcases in partnership with Generation Citizen. All events will run from 9am–1pm. Dates and locations are listed below:

- **Dartmouth:** UMass Dartmouth, **Tuesday, May 27**
- **Springfield:** MassMutual Center, **Wednesday, May 28**
- **Worcester:** DCU Center, **Monday, June 2**
- **Boston:** Edward M. Kennedy Institute, **Friday, June 6**

At each Showcase, **volunteer community advisors** have short conversations with students about their projects, asking questions and offering feedback based on their own expertise. Given the wide range in project topics, advisors come from many backgrounds: community organizers, legislators, business and non-profit leaders, educators, healthcare workers, and more. **League members are a natural fit for this role.** To be notified regarding serving as an advisor for next year's showcases, please fill out an interest form at:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7899552/MA-Civics-Project-Showcases-Community-Advisor-Interest-Form>.

LWV LEXINGTON LOCAL CONSENSUS MEETING ON THE TOPIC OF REPARATIONS: FEBRUARY 11

At its Annual Meeting in June, 2023, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, at the request 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 study is the first step in the **League of Women Voters Consensus Procedure** by which the League develops its policy positions.

Recap of 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.

LWVMA Study and Consensus Procedure on Reparations for Black Americans

The Lexington League will be conducting a formal consensus meeting, open to all League members, at 7:00 pm on February, 11, 2025, at Brookhaven, 1010 Waltham Street (Notice the change of venue from our last report). It is very important that as many members of our League as possible attend this meeting to review the materials prepared by the Reparations Study Committee and to prepare to make a recommendation to the LWVMA regarding a consensus position for the League. The goal is to identify areas where a consensus is possible, not to have any point of view win out over others. 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 and even if consensus is not reached.

Study and Procedure Materials Available

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 American citizens of the United States, including immigrants arriving after 1863?
- 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/).

Purpose of Seeking a Consensus Position

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.

The League is renowned for meticulous studies to reach member consensus on issues. Developing a position or broad policy statement allows League members to operate within the limits of such a policy they advocate on specific issues in the future. For example, the League reproductive rights position still in use today was developed in 1972. With a topic as complex as reparations, our League may choose to support or reject the idea of reparations, support or reject certain suggested forms of reparations, or perhaps, to recommend further education and discussion by the League at this time. We will file a report of the Lexington League's discussion and recommendations with the LWVMA by March 7, 2025

This exercise in civic engagement is unique to the League.

The research and discussion materials made available to us are an excellent opportunity to educate ourselves on this important topic and to discuss its ramifications with other citizens.

Please plan to join us for education, discussion, and hopefully, consensus on February 11 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm at Brookhaven. We want Lexington's voice heard in LWV discussion and policy-making. We need your input.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS **OF THE UNITED STATES**

LWVUS ADVOCACY

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF REMOVING DEI: **A THREAT TO BLACK HISTORY AND BEYOND**

Recently, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have faced growing opposition in schools and workplaces across the nation. The impact of removing DEI policies is far-reaching and disproportionately harms disenfranchised groups.

One of the most visible consequences of this rollback is the removal of Black History education in schools.

The Attack on Black History

Black History education has always faced challenges in American schools. But the removal of DEI frameworks has emboldened efforts to censor critical discussions about systemic racism, slavery, and the civil rights movement. Black History is not just a recounting of the past; it is a vital lens for understanding the present and shaping the future. Limiting its presence in classrooms reduces students' opportunities to learn about the complexities of American history and denies Black students the affirmation that their stories matter.

Erasing or diluting Black History also sets a dangerous precedent. It sends the message that the lived experiences of marginalized groups are less important. This erasure fosters ignorance, diminishes empathy, and perpetuates systemic inequalities.

A Precedent for Other Attacks

The dismantling of Black History education is not an isolated issue. When society tolerates the removal of one group's history or experiences, it opens the door for others to face similar erasures.

For example:

- **Disabled Communities:** DEI initiatives often emphasize the importance of accessibility and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Removing these frameworks could lead to reduced awareness about disability rights and fewer efforts to ensure equitable access to education and public spaces.
- **Religious Minorities:** Teaching about the diverse religious traditions in America is essential for fostering mutual respect and understanding. The removal of DEI could encourage the silencing of religious perspectives that differ from the majority, deepening divisions and perpetuating stereotypes.
- **Other Minority Groups:** Latinx, Asian-American, and Indigenous communities also risk losing opportunities to share their histories and cultures, further marginalizing their contributions to American society.

Why This Matters to Everyone

When one group is targeted, the precedent is set for others to face similar challenges. An attack on DEI undermines the shared principles of equity and justice that benefit all communities. Ignoring these issues because they are not perceived as immediate threats to one's own identity is a dangerous path. Today, it may be Black History or another marginalized group's rights under fire; tomorrow, it could be an issue that directly affects you or your loved ones.

Call to Action

As a society, we cannot afford to remain silent. Removing DEI is unraveling progress that has been made toward building a more inclusive and equitable future. We must advocate for the inclusion of all histories, voices, and experiences in our schools, workplaces, and public spaces.

Black History is American history, and DEI is a commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, has a place in the story of our nation.

LWVUS CEO Celina Stewart has responded to the attacks on DEI by stating,

As an organization working towards a multi-racial representative democracy, the League is outraged about the new administration's rollbacks to federal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility initiatives. Abandoning these values across our government proliferates intolerance of the freedom of expression and identity and is a hateful act used to target federal employees of color and of the LGBTQIA+ community.

* * * * *

Now is the time to lead with compassion, move in partnership, and stand in solidarity with those most directly impacted by the extreme and harmful actions taken this week. As our democracy continues to be tested, the League of Women Voters will remain steadfast in our fight to empower voters and defend democracy for all people.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dianna Wynn, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States has stated: “As we celebrate the beginning of Black History Month, **I want to be clear: no one can erase the history and impact Black history has on American history, voting rights, and our democracy.** I hope you’ll join me in celebrating Black History Month with our virtual **teach-in ahead of the 60th Anniversary of the Selma Jubilee on Feb. 21 at 3pm ET on Zoom.**” Register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LhXf4h_wTUyzGGJNpG8Cqw?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=f2ab45eb-4a86-470c-ac03-90200da6202e#/registration

ACTION ALERT

The US House and Senate have introduced the ***Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act***, which would require citizenship documentation to

register to vote despite the fact that voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering. It is already illegal for non-citizens to register and vote in federal or state elections. Additionally, we have processes to ensure our elections are secure and that only eligible voters are casting ballots. State election officials have systems to verify an individual voter's eligibility and ensure voter rolls are accurate.

The bill's requirement of a document to prove American citizenship to register to vote in federal elections creates one more barrier to the voting process, as many eligible voters do not have easy access to the necessary documents. Compared to white US citizens, citizens of color are three times more likely to lack documents such as birth certificates, passports, naturalization certificates, or certificates of citizenship or face difficulties accessing them.

Legislation like the *SAVE Act* is another in a long list of tactics, like strict voter photo ID requirements and limitations on voter assistance in languages other than English, which make it more difficult for voters of color and naturalized citizens to vote.

Congress must act to ensure that every eligible US citizen has the freedom to vote unimpeded by discriminatory rules rooted in fear and division. LWVUS urges that **we contact our representatives in Congress and ask them to vote against this measure. Contact information can be found at the end of this Bulletin.**

SAVE THE DATE

- February 11, 2025 Concurrence Discussion on Reparations,
7:00-9:00 pm, Brookhaven, 1010 Waltham St.
- February 13, 2025 LWV Candidates Night, 7:00 pm,
Clarke Middle School
- March 19, 2025 Women's History Through Art, 5:30 - 8:30 pm
Lynn Museum and Arts Center
- May 27, 2025 Student Civics Showcase, U. Mass Dartmouth
- May 28, 2025 Student Civics Showcase, MassMutual Center,
Springfield
- June 2, 2025 DCU Center, Worcester
- June 6, 2025 Edward M. Kennedy Institute, Boston

All Civics Showcase events will run from 9:00 am-1:00 pm.

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you would like to submit an article for the March 2025 Lexington LWV Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com by February 28, 2025.

Contact Information for Legislators

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren

JFK Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street
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
24 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02133 with a room number.***

MA Senator Michael Barrett

Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov
Room 617 722-1572

MA Senator Cindy Friedman

Cindy.Friedman@masenate.gov
Room 617 722-1432

MA Representative Michelle Ciccolo

Michelle.Ciccolo@mahouse.gov
Room 617 722-2210

MA Representative Ken Gordon

Ken.Gordon@mahouse.gov
Room 156 617 722-2240

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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 Lexington League Convenor, Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com. All League forums are free and open to the public.