



BULLETIN, January, 2024

***HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON**

### **From the Convenor's Desk**

Greetings for January 2024 -Happy New Year!

The Local League is looking forward to a busy winter, with First Fridays in January and February, the Martin Luther King celebration in January, and Candidates Night in February.

Cary Librarian Koren Stembidge and Lexington School Committee member Kathleen Lenihan will lead the discussion on Book Banning at the January 5, 2024 First Friday at the Cary Library large meeting room.

State Representative Michelle Ciccolo will speak to recycling efforts on Friday, February 2, 2024, 9:30 AM at the Lexington Community Center. (See below.)

For its **Martin Luther King Day Community Conversation, Monday, January 15**, the Lexington Human Rights Committee will be addressing the Voting Rights Act, exploring the historical context of the fight for voting rights, the sacrifices made, and Dr. King's vision more than sixty years ago. The event will be held at **9:15 am at Grace Chapel** on Worthen Road. Sign up to attend at [lexingtonmlk.org](http://lexingtonmlk.org). The Lexington League will be providing voting information and encourages everyone to attend. help by providing voting information in Lexington and recruiting people to attend.

The League will again sponsor **Candidates Night, Thursday, February 15, 2024, 7 PM**, at Clarke Middle School. At this writing, there are contested races for Select Board and Planning Board, so it should be a lively evening. Ellen Harde, League member and former Moderator, from Westwood will again moderate the townwide candidate session. And, of course, all nine precincts will have break-out sessions prior to the townwide session.

We will need help to make the evening successful. Please contact me if you are not a candidate and would like to moderate a precinct meeting. And if you can help with the townwide session by distributing and collecting cards and pencils for questions from the audience and serving on the committee to review the questions to avoid duplicates, let me know. We will also be contacting all candidates for statements to be placed on the Voters' Guide on our website.

As noted in the November Bulletin, the State League is conducting a two-year study on reparations. Some of us attended an informative session sponsored by the NAACCP on compiling statistics on housing and zoning in Medford. Stay tuned for more information.

*Sincerely,*

*Margaret Coppe*

*Convenor*

[mecoppe@gmail.com](mailto:mecoppe@gmail.com)

**LWV LEXINGTON FEBRUARY FIRST FRIDAY FORUM:**  
**REUSE IT? REFILL IT? RECYCLE IT?**  
**REP. MICHELLE CICCOLO ON CURRENT BEST PRACTICES**

Questions about recycling and reuse are among the most frequently asked by Lexington residents. The LWV February First Friday will feature State Representative Michelle Ciccolo, reporting on her research on recycling both in the United States and during her recent fact-finding trip to Germany. This program, on February 2 from 9:30 to 11:00 am, returns to the Lexington Community Center, Room 237, 9:30-11:00 AM.



This program is the fifth in the 2023-2024 LWV First Friday Forum series hosted by the League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. The program is free and open to the public, and as always, there will be time for Q&A after the presentation. For more information about the League and this program go to <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts.lexington>.

## LEAGUE PARTICIPATION IN LEXINGTON'S MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

While the annual Martin Luther King Day activities Lexington are always well planned and welcomed in the community, this year there is a special emphasis on Voting Rights for the Community Conversation. On **January 15, 2024, 10 am-12 Noon, at Grace Chapel**, there will be a **community conversation on voting rights**. The League was asked to contribute information about voting in Lexington and having League members represented at the event would be a plus. Go to [lexingtonmlk.org](http://lexingtonmlk.org) for more information.

## LEXINGTON LWV CANDIDATES FORUM THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2024

Mark your calendars for the 2024 LWV Candidates' Forum at 7:00 pm at Clarke Middle School, Thursday, February 15. With contested races for both the Select Board and the Planning Board, this will be an excellent opportunity to hear directly from the candidates and judge their respective plans and qualifications. Precinct meetings for each of our nine precincts will be held prior to the general session.

| TOWN OF LEXINGTON  |                       |   |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION AND<br>PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY   |                       |   |
| EARLY VOTING   |                       |   |
| SATURDAY,<br>FEBRUARY 24TH   | 9:00 AM TO<br>5:00 PM | <b>DEADLINES</b><br><br><b>LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR EITHER ELECTION:</b><br><i>5PM - Saturday, February 24th</i><br><br><b>LAST DAY to Apply for Ballot by Mail</b><br><i>5PM - Tuesday, February 27th</i><br><br><b>LAST DAY for In-Person Absentee</b><br><i>NOON - Monday, March 4th</i> |
| MONDAY,<br>FEBRUARY 26TH   | 8:30 AM TO<br>4:30 PM |   |
| TUESDAY,<br>FEBRUARY 27TH  | 8:30 AM TO<br>7:00 PM |   |
| WEDNESDAY,<br>FEBRUARY 28TH  | 8:30 AM TO<br>4:30 PM |   |
| THURSDAY,<br>FEBRUARY 29TH   | 8:30 AM TO<br>4:30 PM |   |
| FRIDAY,<br>MARCH 1ST   | 8:30 AM TO<br>1:00 PM |   |
| ALL EARLY VOTING SESSIONS WILL BE HELD IN THE CARY MEMORIAL BLDG.,<br>1605 MASSACHUSETTS AVE, LEXINGTON                            |                       |   |
| ELECTION DAY   |                       |   |
| QUESTIONS?   |                       | <b>TUESDAY,<br/>MARCH 5, 2024</b>   |
| Contact the Town Clerk's Office:<br>781-698-4558<br>or<br><a href="mailto:elections@lexingtonma.gov">elections@lexingtonma.gov</a> |                       | <b>POLLS OPEN<br/>7AM TO 8 PM</b>   |

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETT

## LWVMA EVENTS

### “What’s Up with Offshore Wind” Series Continues

LWVMA has partnered with New England for Offshore Wind (NE4OSW) on a three-part Zoom webinar series featuring respected and knowledgeable speakers who will keep us informed on the status of Offshore Wind. The **third and final webinar of the series, *Conflicts and Solutions: Overcoming Offshore Wind Opposition***, is scheduled for **Thursday, January 18, from 4:00-5:00 pm** and will feature opening remarks from **Katie Theoharides, former Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and current President and CEO of The Trustees of Reservations**. You can watch the first two webinars and register for this last one on the LWVMA web page: [LWVMA.org](http://LWVMA.org).

### LWVMA SUPPORTS COMPREHENSIVE PFAS REGULATION

The Joint Committee on Public Health is considering **H2197/S1356, An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS** (*per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, an umbrella term for a family of thousands of chemicals – about 12,000 at the last count – that are prized for their indestructibility*). Lead sponsor Representative Kate Hogan encourages League members to urge their legislators to report this bill out favorably—without being watered down by industry inputs. The need to stop production of the more than 20,000 PFAS chemicals and their contamination of our waters, soils and consumer products gets more urgent daily.

### Support Freedom to Read in our Schools and Libraries

The Joint Committee on Education is considering **S2528, An act regarding free expression**, and League members are encouraged to urge them to report this bill favorably out of committee. The **hearing will occur on January 10**. The move to restrict freedom of expression in our schools is current and urgent. Just before the holidays, Great Barrington police entered and searched a classroom for a coming-of-age book on LGBTQ+ topics that had been anonymously and erroneously reported as pornographic. This was not legal and we need to reinforce free speech rights for all in the Commonwealth.

## MEET THE SPECIALISTS EVENTS January 17 and January 31

LWVMA's *Meet the Specialists* programs offer members the chance to take a more detailed look at the state level bills LWVMA supports in specific topic areas.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING



The housing crisis in the Commonwealth dominates the daily news. Join **Affordable Housing legislative specialists Lori Stewart and Lucy Kennedy** on Wednesday, **January 17, at 7:00 PM via Zoom** to learn about the bills we support and what you can do to make a difference. The program will spotlight efforts to support critical measures such as access to counsel, eviction sealing, and real estate transfer fees (RETF). Separate RETF bills are pending in the legislature, and a version is also included within Governor Healey's housing bond bill, the Affordable Homes Act, which is scheduled for a public hearing on January 18. LWV Wellesley's Renee Spencer will share her Access to Counsel experience.

Register to attend at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYof-ivpz8iG9ZxzeCxis0PP5PhWHRJ4MzS#/registration>.

### HEALTH CARE



Access to midwives improves health outcomes for birthing people of color. Join **Health Care legislative specialists Ellen Church and Andrea Bresnahan** on **January 31 at 7:00 PM via Zoom** to learn about access to midwives and the other health care bills we support and what you can do to advance them during this second year of the legislative session. Topics include maternal health, regional public health supports, universal single payer healthcare, death with dignity, community immunity, the family and the caregiver tax credit. Register to attend at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqcOyqqj0rGdIs5ZeQrXTuWceFjuSTX6JP#/registration>.

## BALLOT QUESTIONS 2024

The LWVMA Board will issue guidance on the November 2024 ballot questions after the Secretary of State determines which questions will appear on the ballot. This occurs in early July 2024. Presently, the ballot questions that met the first round signature threshold will be laid before the legislature to act before May 1.

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

### LWVUS EVENTS

## NATIONAL LEAGUE CEO TO LEAVE FEBRUARY 2

Dear League Members,

It is with both sadness and pride that I share with you today that our CEO, Virginia Kase Solomón, will be departing from the League of Women Voters in the new year. After five and a half years leading the national office, she has accepted a new opportunity which will be announced next week. Her last day with the League will be February 2, 2024.

Virginia served the League through two midterm elections and the 2020 presidential cycle. She deepened ... League relationships with democracy and social justice partners. She successfully led through COVID-19, built the League's organizing division, and tripled the national staff and League budget.

Please join me and the national board in thanking Virginia for her service and her dedication to the League. [W]e wish her well in her next adventure.

In League,

Deborah Ann Turner, MD, JD

## LWVUS FIELD CALLS 2024

We're all aware that a lot is happening at federal, state, and local levels, from presidential and local elections to nationwide League activities and events. To help prepare Leagues, LWVUS will host a reoccurring League-wide Field Call open to all League members. These calls aim to align and coordinate our League community around upcoming events, issues, and activities. They are not meant to communicate requirements but are a chance to participate in a cross-learning environment with fellow League members.

**Join LWVUS staff and fellow League leaders on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 5 pm ET.**

## ADVOCACY 101 FOR LOCAL LEAGUES TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, ON ZOOM

Local League members are encouraged to tune into a Zoom seminar at 7:00 pm on January 30, 2024 when LWVUS Director of Government Affairs Jessica Jones Capparell will share ways in which local Leagues can take action at local, state and national levels on issues that matter. Register at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMof--ujloHt0CvbW10yXsLbyWU7knAbdT#/registration>

## 2023 IN RETROSPECT: LWVUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

In one day alone, September 19 - National Voter Registration Day Leagues hosted 500+ nationwide registration events, **registering an estimated 100,000 voters**. During the other 364 days of the year, Leagues registered young and first-time voters through our Youth Voter Registration project. From January to June, **86 of our 750+ Leagues registered over 19,000 young people** to vote.



Leagues worked in their communities, **reaching more than 1 million voters with election information through text banks** on [League In Action](#), contacting more than 1,400 friends and family from their networks.

## Empowering Leaders to Take Action Across the South

2023 marked the second year of LWV's [Power the South](#) campaign, Leagues and local partners gather to strengthen their people-powered organizing as an antidote to the rising threats to our democracy.

In 2023, Leagues gathered in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida for trainings and actions designed to make our democracy more inclusive, equitable, and participatory. We **trained 100+ leaders** in relational movement building, particularly that which empowers marginalized and BIPOC communities. In early 2024, our Power the South teams will convene in North Carolina.

## Defending Voters in Our Nation's Courts

Leagues defended voters' rights in all 50 states and DC. States with **major victories in LWV litigation** include:

- **California:** In response to a suit brought by the LWV of Cupertino-Sunnyvale, the Cupertino City Council amended an ordinance that had initially lumped together citizens who belonged to community, charitable, and political organizations with corporate lobbyists. The amendment protects citizens' ability to participate in the civic process.
  - **Colorado:** A federal judge rejected efforts from individuals involved in an extremist organization to dismiss a lawsuit that sought to stop their illegal voter intimidation campaign.
  - **Florida:** A state court struck down Florida's congressional map for violating the Fair Districts Amendment and diluting the power of Black voters.
  - **Missouri:** A circuit court judge granted a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit brought by the LWV of Missouri, blocking the enforcement of legal provisions that criminalize voter engagement activity.
  - **Pennsylvania:** A federal court ruled that the votes of people who submit their mail-in ballots in time — but mistakenly forget to handwrite a date on the return envelope or write the wrong date — must still be counted.
- 
- **Texas:** A federal court ruled that the state's mail-in ballot identification matching provisions violated federal law by disenfranchising voters for irrelevant paperwork errors.



## Providing Election Information on 20,000 Races

Administrators on VOTE411, our digital one-stop-shop for election information in English and Spanish, provided information on more than 20,000 local races and 46,000 candidates. The breadth of information covered is one reason **more than 2 million voters used VOTE411** to find voter information throughout 2023 – more than in any previous non-federal election year.

## Achieving Victories in the Supreme Court

Like 2022, this year brought harmful decisions from the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) in cases like *Creative 303, LLC v. Elenis* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. Yet it also brought victories for fair maps and voter protection.

In *Allen v. Milligan*, the LWVUS, LWV of Alabama (LWVAL), and partners submitted an amicus brief outlining how Black Alabamians in the Black Belt and Mobile constitute a community of interest and have been systematically deprived of their right to elect congressional candidates of their choice because of unfairly drawn maps. On June 8, **SCOTUS upheld a lower court ruling that Alabama must create a second majority Black congressional district** in compliance with Section 2 of the *Voting Rights Act*.

Weeks later, SCOTUS ruled in *Moore v. Harper*, a case where Leagues from all 50 states and DC filed an amicus brief. This case concerned the validity of “independent state legislature theory” (ISLT), which suggests that state legislators can pass federal election laws without state court review (i.e., without a system of checks and balances). In their ruling, **SCOTUS rejected ISLT and affirmed the role of state judicial review over legislative decisions.**



## Demanding Congress Act to Promote Women's Equality

For our second annual Women's Equality Day campaign, LWV partnered with nonprofits, media outlets, and citizens to demand that Congress:

1. Pass voting rights legislation;
2. Add the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution; and
3. Restore reproductive rights to women and those who can become pregnant.

Supporters sent **5.1k letters to Congress**. They also **reached 501,000 people** using the hashtag **#WID23 on social media**.



**Contact Information for Legislators**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren       | 309 Hart Senate Office Building<br>Washington, D.C. 20510<br>202 244-4543    |
| U.S. Senator Edward Markey          | 255 Dirksen Senate Office Building<br>Washington, D.C. 20510<br>202 224-2742 |
| U.S. Representative Katherine Clark | 2448 Rayburn House Office Building<br>Washington, D.C. 20515<br>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         | <a href="mailto:Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov">Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov</a><br>Room 617 722-1572       |
| MA Senator Cindy Friedman          | <a href="mailto:Cindy.Friedman@masenate.gov">Cindy.Friedman@masenate.gov</a><br>Room 617 722-1432   |
| MA Representative Michelle Ciccolo | <a href="mailto:Michelle.Ciccolo@mahouse.gov">Michelle.Ciccolo@mahouse.gov</a><br>Room 617 722-2210 |
| MA Representative Ken Gordon       | <a href="mailto:Ken.Gordon@mahouse.gov">Ken.Gordon@mahouse.gov</a><br>Room 156 617 722-2240         |

## SAVE THE DATE

|                   |                                  |               |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| January 5, 2024   | First Friday Forum: Book Banning | 9:30 am       | Cary Library         |
| January 15, 2024  | MLK Day                          | 10 am - Noon  | Grace Chapel         |
| January 17, 2024  | Specialist: Health Care          | 7:00 pm       | Zoom                 |
| January 18, 2024  | Off Shore Wind Seminar           | 4:00- 5:00 pm | Zoom                 |
| January 24, 2024  | LWVUS Field Call                 | 5:00-6:00 pm  | On line              |
| January 30, 2024  | Advocacy 101                     | 7:00 pm       | Zoom                 |
| January 31, 2024  | Specialist: Affordable Housing   | 7:00 pm       | Zoom                 |
| February 2, 2024  | First Friday Forum: Recycling    | 9:30-11:00 am | Community Center     |
| February 15, 2024 | Candidates' Night                | 7:00 pm       | Clarke Middle School |
| June 27-30, 2024  | LWVUS Biennial Convention        |               | Washington, D.C.     |

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF 2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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](mailto:mecoppe@gmail.com). All League forums are free and open to the public.

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the February 2024 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at [wendy\\_manz@yahoo.com](mailto:wendy_manz@yahoo.com) prior to January 24.



