

The logo for the League of Women Voters of Lexington features the letters "LWV" in a large, bold, blue font. A red brushstroke underline is positioned beneath the "LWV" text. To the right of this, the words "LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS" are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) at the end. Below this, the words "OF LEXINGTON" are written in a light blue, sans-serif font.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LEXINGTON

BULLETIN, SEPTEMBER, 2022

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

LWV OCTOBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, OCTOBER 7, 2022: The Future of Affordable Housing in Lexington

The Lexington League is kicking off its 2022-2023 First Friday season on October 7, 2022, **in person at the Lexington Community Center, 39 Marrett Road, Room 242.**

Slowly but surely, Lexington is moving to establish mechanisms in Town to respond to the local and regional need for more moderate and affordable housing. For more than a year, a committee has been exploring the possibility of creating a local non-profit housing development corporation and a local Municipal Affordable Housing Trust to receive and distribute funds for that purpose. At the same time, LexHAB has voted to transition into a non-profit housing development corporation which would could operate without the constraints imposed by its current quasi-municipal status.

Gretchen Reisig, Vice Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust Study Committee, and Sarah Morrison, Executive Director of LexHAB, will discuss these developments at the October First Friday Forum, and introduce related warrant articles which will be on fall Special Town Meeting agenda.

The program is the first in this season's First Friday Forum series, presented to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. As always there will be time for questions at the end of the presentation.

PREVIEW: NOVEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, NOVEMBER 4, 2022: Townwide Survey Results

Every five years, the Vision for Lexington Committee conducts a survey of Lexington residents to obtain information to aid the Select Board, the School Committee and the Planning Board in policy planning. This year's results are in, and study director Marion Cohen will take us through some of the data. Read more in the November Bulletin.

LEAGUE LEADER LOTTE SCHARFMAN HONORED WITH CARY LIBRARY “LEXSEEHER” BANNER

“Democracy is not a spectator sport.” This axiom, familiar to all Leaguers, is attributed to Lotte E. Scharfman, who served as president of the Lexington LWV from 1963 to 1965, and on the state League Board from 1965 to 1969, when she became president of the LWVMA. Sadly, she did not live to serve out her term as president. She died in 1970, having spent the evening lobbying the then Speaker of the Massachusetts house.

As a young woman, Lotte Scharfman escaped with her family from Austria during World War II, and embracing her new life in the United States, devoted herself to supporting the democratic process and helping citizens to gain effective access to their government.

In the current “LexSeeHer” exhibit at Cary Library, her banner hangs with those of other distinguished women connected with Lexington and its history. Her enduring legacy is also honored with the LWVMA Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund, (the League’s Citizen Education Fund) and with her lasting axiom, which continues to inspire League activism today.



LWVMA EVENTS

LWVMA Townhall on September 21: Nonpartisanship in Partisan Times

The topic for the next quarterly LWVMA Townhall is “Nonpartisanship: What does it look like in these hyper-partisan times?”

Practicing and projecting non-partisanship is a continuing concern of the League, and a recent article in *ProPublica* (www.propublica.org) has made the topic especially timely. The article reported an increasing Republican perception of the League as a partisan organization. The upcoming Town Hall will explore the difference between taking positions on issues, as the League has always done, and taking positions on candidates or parties, which the League expressly declines to do. To register, paste the following zoom address into your browser:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvd-6uqjgtGNb5rM22QGB1x4D70w2GoF07>.

LWVMA ADVOCACY

MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:¹

LWVMA Scores Legislative Wins on Voting Reform, Climate Crisis, Reproductive Rights, Immigrant Rights

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts celebrates several major legislative victories during the 2021-2022 formal legislative session, which ended July 31, 2022.

The VOTES Act. Passage of the VOTES Act to improve election laws has been a key League priority. The Act made permanent reforms that were put in place for the 2020 elections to deal with pandemic issues. These reforms include unrestricted voting by mail, expanded early voting, and reducing the cutoff for voter registration from 20 days to 10 days before an election. The law expedites vote counting by allowing officials to process ballots received before Election Day and widens the pool of potential poll workers. It requires that eligible incarcerated citizens have access to voting. Massachusetts will also be required to join the national Election Registration Information Center (ERIC) to clean up its voter rolls.²

Same-day voter registration was dropped from the VOTES Act, but the League will continue to advocate for this provision in the next legislative session.

MA Climate Bill. The legislature's final climate bill was based on an offshore wind bill, and incorporated provisions from several additional, separate bills that the League supported. The law expands use of offshore wind energy, promotes clean energy development, and strengthens the electrical grid. Notable is a provision that will allow ten Massachusetts

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1. This is a long article, but League advocacy has helped yield a list of impressive results in the 2021-2022 Massachusetts legislative session.
 2. A youtube.com presentation on the practical effects of the VOTES Act and the role League members can play in implementing it features Michelle Tassinari, Director of Elections in the Secretary of State's office. It can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RVPAU6qqIM>

communities that have submitted home rule petitions (including Lexington) to ban energy systems based on fossil fuels from new residential construction. Sponsored by Lexington Senator Mike Barrett, this ban is considered a pilot program, which, if successful, may be replicated throughout the state. The Climate bill has attracted national recognition as one of the most ambitious and transformative laws in the nation, placing Massachusetts at the forefront of states working to achieve an equitable clean energy future. See below for more details.

Reproductive Rights. Following the U.S. Supreme Court's overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in June, the legislature and the Governor worked quickly to codify additional reproductive rights and protect abortion providers in Massachusetts. The bill that passed included provisions from other bills the League supported to provide access to a full spectrum of pregnancy care and to make medication abortion available at public universities.

Immigrant Rights. The League backed the bill to provide drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants in Massachusetts, which passed over the Governor's veto. A November ballot question effort to repeal that law is under way, and repeal will likely be on the ballot.

Child Care and Early Education. The Common Start bill, which greatly increases funding and support for child care and early education, passed the Senate but stalled in the House. The budget, however, established a first year "down payment" on this bill by including more than \$500 million in new early education funding.

Remote Public Meetings. The legislature punted on a bill which would have permitted public meetings which are subject to the open meeting law to be held remotely, as has been allowed during the COVID pandemic. Instead, the legislature extended the deadline for a decision on remote access from July 15, 2022, to March 31, 2023. The League intends to advocate for remote access in the next session.

Basic Human Needs. Several bills supported by the League, under the rubric of meeting basic human needs, became law this session:

- Schools cannot deny hot lunches or act against students because of meal debt.
 - Assistance was increased to the poorest families, though the families will still be below the poverty level.
 - A secure common application portal was established for individuals to simultaneously apply for state-administered needs-based benefits and services.
 - Provisions ending child marriage in Massachusetts passed as a budget amendment.
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Other Bills. A number of other bills the LWVMA supported came close but did not make it over the finish line by July 31:

A major bill to address disparities in the delivery of public health services, including ensuring minimum public health standards for every community, creating a uniform data

collection and reporting system, and establishing a sustainable state funding mechanism to support local boards of health and health departments, passed and was sent to the Governor, who returned it with amendments after the formal session adjourned. There may be additional action on this bill if the legislature reconvenes.

Provisions in some bills were included in the huge economic development bill that was in conference committee as the session ended. The legislature may reconvene to deal with this important bill, so League-supported provisions—an improved earned income credit for working families and sealing records of eviction notices and actions (the HOMES act)—may still become law.

Two measures passed the Senate but were not reported out of the House Ways & Means Committee: free access to menstrual products in prisons, homeless shelters and public schools; and age-appropriate and accurate sex education in schools.

Gun law reforms were under discussion at the end of the session, and Speaker Ronald Mariano has indicated a major omnibus gun control bill will be introduced next session.

The League's legislative specialists will be working on these, and other bills that cover positions important to the League, when the new session of the legislature convenes in January 2023. In total, our Legislative Action Committee of 23 legislative specialists followed more than 170 bills during the 2021-2022 legislative session, submitting written testimony on all the bills and testifying in person at hearings on many of them. League written testimony and the status of all these bills can be found on the League Website: www.lwvma.org.

Kathy Leonardson serves as chair of the Legislative Action Committee, and Nancy Brumback is vice-chair. The legislative specialists for this legislative session are Clare Gordon, Lori Stewart, Louise Haldeman, Palma McLaughlin, Nancy Bettinger, Lucy Costa, Mary Frantz (retired this year), Susan Loffredo, Karen Mazza, Pat Costello, Linda Freedman, Launa Zimmaro, Carolyn Lee, June Michaels, Jen Muroff, Sue McCalley, Janice Goodell, Valentina Pasquantonio, Vedna Lacombe-Heywood, Tanya Roy, Lois Levin and Jan Soma. Mary Cummings is our legislative envoy coordinator, and Susan Millinger is the LWVMA Board representative.

[MA in the Vanguard with Two Climate Change Laws](#)

The offshore wind bill (including other climate change provisions), which was signed by Governor Baker last month, builds on the sweeping bill titled **An Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy** signed into law in March 2021.

These two laws put Massachusetts in the forefront of states addressing the impacts of climate change. The roadmap bill provided the framework; this session's bill has added the "muscle" with specific provisions, including:

- increased green energy procurement primarily from wind, but also from solar, storage and geothermal sources;

- larger incentives and “point of purchase” rebates for electric vehicle purchases;
- inclusion of non-fossil-fuel-based programs (e.g., air and ground source heat pumps) as part of the Mass Save incentive program;
- grid modernization;
- removal of wood-burning biomass plants from qualifying as “renewable energy;”
- permission for 10 towns (including Lexington) to participate in a pilot program banning fossil fuel energy systems in new and major renovations programs; and
- special protections for environmental justice populations/communities.

These are specific, useful steps toward development of net zero clean energy in Massachusetts. The LWVMA will continue to advocate for further progress as we go forward.

LWVMA VOTER SERVICE

[VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org)

The LWVMA online voters’ guide for the 2022 Massachusetts elections is now live.

It covers all candidate races from U.S. Congress down through statewide races as well as all contested county races. The guide also covers the Massachusetts Governor’s Council races. We will be adding information about the general election ballot questions soon. The League continues to urge those candidates who have not yet submitted their information to do so. As always, the election information provided is nonpartisan; the League never endorses or supports parties or candidates.

[VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org) also includes up-to-date information and deadlines for the recently enacted “VOTES Act” law so voters can plan how and when to vote. We hope you will help us share this valuable tool to encourage voters in your community to make informed choices as they go to the polls this fall.

MASSACHUSETTS 2022 BALLOT QUESTIONS

The LWVMA is not taking a stand on three November ballot questions. The state Board makes a decision on each initiative question based on existing positions adopted by the League after study and voting. Local Leagues cannot advocate for or against ballot questions which have not been endorsed by the LWVMA, and League members can only work on them as individuals without League identification.

ELECTION PROTECTION HELP WANTED

LWVMA is working with partners ACLU Massachusetts, Common Cause, and the Urban League in an election protection effort spearheaded by Lawyers for Civil Rights. There will be opportunities to help with the Nov. 8 general election, including monitoring polls which have historically had problems on Election Day, working in the hotline call center on Election Day (for lawyers), and working from home leading up to the election to identify misinformation on social media sites. Stay tuned for more information this month.

**The LWVMA Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report is available at:
<https://lwmma.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2020-21-annual-report-5.pdf>**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS EVENTS

LWVUS 2022 National Convention Recap

The 55th National Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) was held over three days at the end of June. It was the League's first hybrid Convention, with more than 1000 members from all 50 states joining both virtually and in-person in Denver, CO.

Notably, the 2022 Convention coincided with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn the longstanding constitutional right to abortion in Dobbs v. Jackson. Citing the Dobbs decision in her energetic opening remarks, LWVUS board president Dr. Deborah Ann Turner reflected on her experiences as an obstetrician/gynecologist and the painful insight it has given her into the lives of real women. Reaffirming the League's dedication to "reproductive justice" she declared, "We must use our anger as fuel for action." Suiting action to her words, Convention attendees joined Denver activists on June 24 in rallying before the Colorado State Capitol Building.

Turning to voters' rights, a core purpose of the League, Dr. Turner recalled her participation in the recent reenactment of the Freedom March in Selma, Alabama, and stressed the inspiration that arose from marchers of every race, gender and political persuasion joining together in that action. She stressed the continuing importance of the League's support of voters' rights, and offered this kind of cooperation across boundaries as an example for the League in all its dealings

Dr. Turner closed by announcing the League's next "moonshot" goal: abolition of the Electoral College. The League has long supported this goal because of the College's racist history and failure to represent the popular vote.

Thoughtful action remained a focus throughout Convention. On June 23, a panel of women leaders in the voting rights and social justice movements spoke to the ways in which women can power democracy. Later, MSNBC political analyst Joy Reid reflected on current threats to the democratic process and the essential nature of the LWV's work in her keynote address.

During plenary sessions, the LWVUS Board presented its 2020-2022 biennium report, and the delegates elected the 2022-2024 LWVUS Board of Directors. Dr. Turner was once again elected as board president, a role she has held since 2020. Delegates also approved the 2022-2024 budget (with no increase in dues before 2024).

Here are the major additional actions of the Convention:

1. The Campaign for Making Democracy Work[®] was adopted for the new biennium and amended to add language around the 'election of the president by popular vote,' pursuant to the President's announcement of a new long-term goal (to get underway after the midterm elections) of abolishing the Electoral College.
2. Delegates voted to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the LWVUS program so that resources – both financial and people powered – will be allocated to accomplish its passage and continue the work already in progress.
3. Delegates voted to retain all current League positions on issues; adopted two new positions by concurrence (Criminal Justice and Digital Equity); and updated a third position by concurrence (Health Care). These will be published in the 2022 – 2024 edition of Impact on Issues before the end of the calendar year.
4. Four bylaw amendments passed. Two were related to the Structure Transformation Plan and will be implemented over the coming months and years. Leagues at all levels will be presented with engagement opportunities as this work unfolds. Two other amendments were adopted to modernize the LWVUS Nominating Committee and LWVUS Board operations.
- 5.

LWVUS Statement on Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization

On June 24, LWVUS President **Dr. Deborah Turner** and CEO **Virginia Kase Solomón** issued the following joint statement in response to the Supreme Court decision in ***Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization***. That case overturned the constitutional right to abortion established in the landmark cases of ***Roe v. Wade*** and ***Planned Parenthood v. Casey*** almost 50 years ago.

"Today's ruling strips women and those who may become pregnant of their bodily autonomy and will have devastating — and immediate — consequences across the country. While the Court's opinion was expected, its harm is extreme and real. When women and those who can become pregnant can no longer make reproductive decisions for their own bodies, they are no longer equal individuals in our democracy. This harm will exacerbate societal inequalities and fall disproportionately on people of color and low-income communities already facing egregious obstacles to health care."

"The decision foreshadows the erosion of other well-established Constitutional rights including marriage equality, access to contraception, and the right to engage in private, consensual intimate conduct.

"The dissenting Justices get it exactly right: today's majority opinion is an assault on the constitutional guarantee to equal protection of the laws and the right to due process. With this decision. . . historically marginalized communities have no guarantees that their civil rights will be protected.

"The League of Women Voters stands. . . with . . . all persons who fear the dangerous consequences of this decision. We will use our anger to fight in the legislatures, in the courts, and in the streets. We call on our elected leaders at the state and federal levels to act swiftly to restore bodily autonomy to all people. "Women hold the power to create a more perfect democracy. We will not stand by as constitutional rights are stripped away, one by one. Women's rights are human rights, and we will continue to fight until the right to abortion is restored. Our lives depend on it."

PEOPLE POWERED FAIR MAPS (PPFM) REPORT

In September 2019, the LWVUS launched its national redistricting effort: People Powered Fair Maps™ (PPFM). The program aimed to create greater transparency, fairness and public participation in the redistricting process, which ultimately determines voting access, partisan representation, and federal funding for communities across the country. This year it published its report on the work so far.

Outreach. PPFM worked to increase community awareness and participation in the redistricting process through virtual and in-person trainings, workshops, and Q&A sessions. From 2019-2022, PPFM engaged more than **1.4 million people** with over **3,600 redistricting events**. Efforts included work with **2,446 partners and the Coalition Hub for Advancing Redistricting and Grassroots Engagement (CHARGE)**. Through CHARGE alone, the League empowered **2 million people** from marginalized communities to engage.

New district maps. The result was that more people got involved in the map-drawing and submitting process — and **five of the district maps** built thanks to PPFM efforts were ultimately implemented. That's five states where the next decade of representation will be determined by the work of the people rather than the preferences of politicians and will be much more transparent.

Challenging Unfair Maps. The League joined **11 state lawsuits** and **six federal cases** challenging partisan and/or racial gerrymandering. Of these cases, **2 partisan gerrymandering** and **4 racial gerrymandering challenges** were ultimately successful. These states will now redraw maps to more accurately represent various populations, including Asian American Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian (AAPINH), Black, and Latino communities. Litigation is ongoing in seven additional states.

Looking ahead. The League is already looking ahead to the 2031 redistricting process. Leagues in states such as Oregon and South Dakota are looking to pass redistricting reform

on the 2022 ballot, and the LWVUS will continue to support state Leagues in this effort. There is a continuing focus on civic education, to make more people aware of the redistricting process and to encourage them to get involved in making future redistricting maps more truly people powered'



[The Equal Rights Amendment Lives](#)

A new resolution, H. Res. 891, has been introduced in the US House affirming that the Equal Rights Amendment has met all of the requirements needed to be added to the US Constitution. Introduced by Congresswomen Jackie Speier (CA) and Carolyn Maloney (NY), the resolution will reflect the sentiment of the House that under the terms of Article V, the ERA is already part of the Constitution and should be considered effective as of January 27, 2022. The League applauds the reassertion of the ERA and urges you to contact your representative today in support of the resolution. (See contact information at the end of this Bulletin.)

[LWVUS Seeking Your Input on Organization Policies](#)

The LWVUS board has drafted two policies, formed from existing bylaws, policies and legal/non-profit best practices, that provide clarity on organization-wide expectations for LWVUS, Leagues, and members:

- [League Rights & Responsibilities](#) and
- [Member Rights & Responsibilities](#).

As the LWVUS Board and staff prepare to finalize and implement these policies, they are seeking additional input. Text of the draft policies may be found on the LWVUS web site: www.lwv.org, under Membership and Local Leagues, and then under League Management. League members are encouraged to submit their comments on these policies by **October 11, 2022**, via the forms posted on each page.

Contact Information for Legislators

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren	309 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 202 244-4543
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
MA Senator Michael Barrett	Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov 617 722-1572
MA Senator Cindy Friedman	Cindy.Friedman@masenate.gov 617 722-1432
MA Representative Michelle Ciccolo	Michelle.Ciccolo@mahouse.gov 617 722-2210

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.

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the October, 2022 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to September 30, 2022.

