



August 24, 2020

To: Concord Select Board Chair Michael Lawson; Select Board Clerk Linda Escobedo;
Select Board Members Jane Hotchkiss, Terri Ackerman and Susan Bates;
Town Manager Stephen Crane

Subject: Town House Renovation Project and Town Clerk's Office Relocation

Dear Mr. Lawson, Mr. Crane and Members of the Concord Select Board,

The League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle (LWVCC) is dismayed by the plans to relocate the Town Clerk's Office to the basement of the Harvey-Wheeler Community Center immediately after the Primary Election and just before Town Meeting. We support the concerns expressed by Judy Zaunbrecher, the Co-President of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and a member of LWVCC, in the letter dated August 21st to the Select Board and Town Manager (attached below).

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to empower voters and protect democracy, and we take that mission seriously. The upcoming election, in the face of a pandemic, is unprecedented. Efforts to undermine voting by mail and the integrity of the election process are contributing to voter anxiety. Leagues across the country are working to ensure that our elections are safe and that citizens know how and where to cast their vote and can be confident that their vote will count.

Voting is at the heart of our democracy. Throughout our history, people have fought and died to secure the right to vote. One hundred years ago today, the struggle to adopt 19th Amendment, extending voting rights to women, was completed when Tennessee's ratification was certified. The battle to protect and extend voting rights to all US citizens continues today.

The Massachusetts legislature has passed legislation that will enable all citizens of the Commonwealth to vote without jeopardizing their health. The League supports our Town Clerk Kaari Mai Tari's efforts to implement these changes for the Primary Election and insure a safe and secure election process in Concord as we move toward the General Election. We are very concerned that the move to Harvey-Wheeler will create confusion for Concord citizens.

Until we learned of this move, we had great confidence that in Concord the election would be conducted in the same manner as in the past, preserving the integrity of the electoral process and avoiding any confusion and uncertainty for Concord residents. The move to Harvey Wheeler will raise logistical, security and communication issues that are likely to jeopardize the administration of the election and will certainly undermine public confidence.

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Concord, Massachusetts, 01742

There is nothing more important to our Town and our country than safeguarding the vote. During this critical time, the integrity of the Town Clerk's office and the work that must be done, must be maintained. The savings in cost and construction convenience that may be gained by starting the renovation work at the Town Hall now are not worth the risk to the integrity of our election process. The LWVCC urges you to delay this work until well after the General Election.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Rohwein, President
League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle
President@lwvcc.org

Attachments: Letter from Judy Zaunbrecher to Concord Select Board and Town Manager, dated 8/21/20

Cc: Kaari Mai Tari, Concord Town Clerk
Kerry Lafleur, Concord Finance Director
Matt Johnson, incoming member of Select Board
Kate Hodges, Assistant Town Manager