



BULLETIN, October, 2024

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Greetings from the Convener's Desk

We are closing in on the November 5 Presidential Election and many of our League members are busy working on campaigns. While the League is nonpartisan and does not endorse any candidates or campaigns, we do encourage members to actively work to support the democratic process. We will likely have the results by the time the next bulletin reaches you.

On the local scene, membership renewals have gone out, and they are starting to arrive in the League mailbox. Thanks to those who have already renewed and a reminder to those who have not to send in their forms and dues. This is the last time that renewals will be handled by the local League.

The national League of Women Voters, based on a vote at the National Convention, is moving renewals and new sign-ups to an electronic format, starting next year. Members will receive a renewal notice from LWVUS with the option to renew on line. There will also be suggested dues, with the option to pay another amount left up to you. There will still be an option to renew by check and paper. Going forward, renewals will be on a rolling basis, which means that your renewal date will be 5 year from whenever you paid your prior dues. The local League will receive twenty percent of the dues and any donations you make automatically. Currently, we receive dues directly, report our membership to LWVUS, and then make per member payments to the LWVUS and the LWVMA.

Our November First Friday will be 9:30 am, November 1, 2024, at the Lexington Community Center, with David Pinsonneault, Director of Lexington Public Works, sharing updates on trash, recycling, and composting. Mark your calendar.

Margaret Coppe
Convener

OCTOBER FIRST FRIDAY CANCELLED: OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON NOVEMBER BALLOT QUESTIONS

The Lexington League regrets that unexpected scheduling difficulties have forced us to cancel the planned October First Friday Forums on the state ballot questions which will be on the November 5th ballot. As a reminder, the five questions are:

- Question 1: State Auditor's Authority to Audit the Legislature
- Question 2: Elimination of MCAS as High School Graduation Requirement
- Question 3: Unionization for Transportation Network Drivers
- Question 4: Limited Legalization and Regulation of Certain Natural Psychedelic Substances
- Question 5: Minimum Wage for Tipped Workers.

For more detailed information on each question, together with the majority positions of the legislature's Special Joint Committee on Initiative Petitions, we refer League members to the booklet previously mailed to all voters from the Secretary of the Commonwealth:

[Massachusetts Information for Voters 2024 Ballot Questions](#) .

While the League takes no position on any ballot question, it invites you to Join a Zoom education forum on **Question 1: *State Auditor's Authority to Audit the Legislature*** on **Tuesday, October 8 at 7:00 PM via Zoom**. There will be a briefing on arguments for and against the measure and time for questions. Register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlpd-2urDwuEtJEQmn7jcoXEWbcHChQsSB5#/registration>

LEXINGTON LWV NOVEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM: UPDATE ON LEXINGTON TRASH AND RECYCLING

The League of Women Voters of Lexington will hold a **First Friday forum on Friday, November 1, 2024, 9:30 am in Room 237 at the Lexington Community Center**. It will feature **David Pinsonneault, Director of Lexington Public Works**, with an update on the town trash and recycling program:

- What is no longer considered trash,
- Ways to reduce trash,
- Ways to increase recycling,
- Additional waste bans, and
- Automated collection.

We will also get an update on the town's food waste program and discuss some strategies for Lexington moving forward, in light of rising disposal costs.



Mr. Pinsonneault will be joined by Robert Beaudoin, Superintendent of Environmental Services, Julia Green, MassDEP Municipal Assistance Coordinator for Northeast District 3; and a member from the Waste Reduction Task Group.

This program is the first in the 2024-2023 LWV First Friday Forum series hosted by the League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Like all League forums it is free and open to the public. Lex Media will record the program, and there will be time for questions and answers. For more information about the League and this program go to <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts.lexington>.

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LHS VOLUNTEERS STAFF VOTER INFORMATION SITE ON NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY IN LEXINGTON

On the afternoon of National Voter Registration Day, September 17, 2024, Lexington High School Students staffed a Voter Information Site at the Lexington Depot, designed to inform new voters, as well as those already registered, of the steps to register and vote. We take pride in the engagement and participation of our young people and students in the democratic process! Pictured with the students are State Representative Michelle Ciccolo and indefatigable League organizer Jeri Zeder.



VOTER REMINDERS FROM THE LEAGUE

- Make sure you have a voting plan for how, when, and where you will cast your ballot. Check [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) for all your options for mail-in voting, voting early, and finding your polling place.
- As part of your voting plan, check to make sure you're registered at your current address using [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org). Make sure your family and friends are registered to vote. Even if you're already registered, it's a good idea to check your registration.
- Beware of false claims about the election results. We expect bad actors to spread disinformation in order to cast doubt for their own political gain. You can report election disinformation you see online at <https://reportdisinfo.org/>.
- Once they are cast, our votes must be respected, no matter the results. Election officials implement ballot processing and tabulation safeguards designed to ensure that each ballot cast in the election can be correctly counted. These safeguards include chain of custody procedures, auditable logging requirements, and canvass processes. States safeguard mail-in ballots by verifying signatures, tracking barcodes, and setting clear chains of custody for all ballots.
- All states have some form of pre- and post-election testing of voting equipment as well as ballot counting processes open for public observation and many more states have implemented post-election audits, including "risk-limiting-audits," to ensure the vote count as done correctly and that we can trust the results.
- Election results are not final until certification. Election night reporting is unofficial, and those results may change as ballot counting is completed. With the increase of absentee and mail-in voting since 2020, we should all prepare for many election results to be announced after Election Day. As we wait for votes to be counted, we know that this waiting period is exactly what should be happening. Election officials are working around the clock to count all ballots, and it's essential that they take the time to make sure every vote is counted. Remember: a complete and accurate ballot count is more important than a fast ballot count. We may not get a complete count on Election Day, but that's OK – it means our trusted election administrators are counting every ballot.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA VOTER SERVICE

ELECTION PROTECTION

It's not too late to register to be a **poll monitor**. You can sign up at the [LWVMA Protect the Vote link](#). Signing up is not a firm commitment but will put you on the list for information about training programs and, later on, the polling places and shifts to be covered.

The job is a minimum of one three-hour shift on Election Day, Nov. 5, covering a polling location. You will be able to choose both the shift time and the polling location. The Election Protection poll monitors watch for problems with access to voting, and also ask voters who have been turned away if they need assistance. Volunteers do not need any special qualifications, though if you are fluent in a non-English language, you are especially needed.

Volunteers will have to complete a mandatory training session that details what to look for and how to react. LWVMA is sponsoring one of the trainings, on October 7 at 3:00 PM, but League volunteers can attend any session that works for them. More complete details are available at: <https://protectthevote.net/?source=LWVMA>

ASSOCIATED PRESS VOTER TURNOUT PROJECT

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is partnering again with the Associated Press on an Election Day voter turnout data collection project – and we need your help!

If you are planning to vote in person on Election Day Tuesday, Nov. 5, (or if you are working at the polls), please volunteer for this project. It will only take a few minutes. Here's the general idea:

- When you check in to vote, you can ask the warden for your voter number (AKA “the count off the ballot box”). You can also get the number from your polling place tabulator screen after you insert your ballot .
- Note exactly what time you voted.
- Report your voter number and voting time to the AP using a simple Google Form link you will receive.
- If you are working or observing at the polls on Election Day (and have your clerk's permission), you can report the number of voters at your precinct at specific times when you take a break or at the end of your shift.

The information you share will help the AP refine its voter turnout data models throughout the day before the polls close.

LWVMA hopes you will consider participating in this project designed to improve Election Night reporting. If you have not volunteered previously, please sign up by sending an email with your **name, address, phone number and your precinct number** to maturnout@ap.org. Reid Magney, the AP project coordinator, will then confirm your participation and send you detailed instructions before the election. If you previously volunteered for one of the primaries this year, there's no need to sign up again. The AP will reach out to you about participating in November.

LWVMA EVENTS

REPARATIONS STUDY COMMITTEE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The LWVMA Reparations Study Committee is offering a series of group discussions on Zoom throughout the fall of 2024, facilitated by Debra Dagwan and Jeffrey Gold, centered on Ta-Nehisi Coates' foundational essay, "The Case for Reparations." The group discussions 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. Participation involves registration, as each group discussion will be limited to 15 participants. Every group discussion is a "one and done" experience, meant to engage the participant in respectful and reflective listening. Discussions on Remaining discussions are scheduled for October 17, November 21, and December 12. Register through LWVMA's calendar of events at <https://lwmva.org/events/>.

LWVMA ADVOCACY

MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Informal sessions of the Massachusetts Legislature continue through December 31. According to House Speaker Mariano, conference committees are working to reach consensus on compromise reports despite the end of formal session July 31. We await action on the Economic Development bill that will potentially include the following LWVMA priorities: Raise the Age, Statewide Action for Public Health Excellence or SAPHE 2.0, and Campaign Funds for Childcare. The Climate and Energy omnibus bill related to permitting and siting that could also include Bottle Bill expansion is locked in negotiations. The LWVMA Legislative Action Committee (LAC) will update us as information is released. LAC is recruiting new volunteer specialists for the following

topic areas: climate emergency, natural resources including PFAS, and meeting basic human needs. Contact specialists@lwvma.org for more information.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS ADVOCACY

STATEMENT OF POSITION ON DECLINE OF LOCAL NEWS AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY

At its June 2024 Convention, the LWVUS formally adopted, by concurrence, a statement of **position on the Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy**, which will be added to “Impact on Issues 2024-2026” in the Representative Government section of the League Website, and may be used by League members in their advocacy efforts:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes it is the responsibility of the government to provide support for conditions under which credible local journalism can survive and thrive. The League defines local news as accurate, in-depth coverage of government entities, including but not limited to, city councils, county councils, county boards of commissioners, health departments, schools, and school boards. The League supports credible and ethical local journalism, in whatever format it is published, as essential to our democracy. The League supports efforts to ensure everyone has access to information necessary for casting an informed ballot and that credible local news sources are integral to this pursuit. The League believes that support for the viability of local news may take a variety of forms. Control of the content must remain exclusively with the news organizations. The League also believes media literacy and news education, including support for journalism students, are essential. These opportunities should be expanded in schools and throughout communities. The League believes that everyone should have access to comprehensive, credible local news and that barriers to access should be removed. These barriers include, but are not limited to, geography, economic status, and education.

The full “2024 – 2026 Impact on Issues” document will be published in the coming months.

LWVUS ACTION ALERTS

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Tell your elected officials that we can't wait another year for equality. We have now passed the two-year anniversary of the overturning of **Roe v. Wade**, one example of the devastating consequences of our women's equal rights not being protected. **The Equal Rights Amendment will prevent the further rollback of equal rights, provide a vital tool to the judicial branch to combat discrimination, and pave the way for additional legislative progress.**

The ERA has met all ratification requirements but has yet to be added to the Constitution, leaving more than half the population unprotected from discrimination. This vulnerability is clear in the ongoing fights against unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, limited access to comprehensive health care, and more.

The good news is that there is a bipartisan congressional resolution affirming the validity of the ERA as part of the Constitution. The League continues to work tirelessly alongside our partners to demand federal action, constituents' voices must be heard.

Take one minute to tell your members of Congress to act and ensure that this is our last year without the ERA. Equality and our democracy cannot wait.

JOHN LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT

The ***John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (JLVRAA)***, reintroduced in Congress a year ago, ensures that all registered voters have equal access to the ballot box, but it remains pending in Congress. .

Since the 2013 Supreme Court decision in ***Shelby County v. Holder*** gutted the **1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA)**, at least twenty-nine states have passed ninety-four laws that make it harder to vote, with the burden falling heaviest on Black voters and other voters of color. We need a fully restored Voting Rights Act to defend our democracy and protect the freedom to vote.

The VRA was landmark civil rights legislation in 1965, responding to barriers that prevented Black voters from exercising their rights to vote. It ensured that no state or local government could prevent individuals from voting based on race or ethnicity. The record of states since ***Shelby County v. Holder*** demonstrates that the law remains

necessary to prevent voter discrimination and ensure that power remains with the people.

The ***John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*** would restore and modernize the VRA, ensuring renewed oversight, accountability, and justice in our democracy so all voters can exercise their right to vote.

It has been 59 years since the VRA was passed, yet we are still engaged in the fight against voter discrimination. In this 2024 election cycle, join us in calling on Congress to strengthen voting rights and pass the ***John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act***. Contact your representatives in Congress to let them know that the League continues to press for passage of this important legislation.

SAVE THE DATE

October 17, 2024 Reparations discussion on Zoom

November 1, 2024 First Friday, Update on Recycling 9:30 am
Community Center

November 5, 2024 Election Day

November 21, 2024 Reparations discussion on Zoom

December 21, 2024 Reparations discussion on Zoom

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.

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

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF 2024-2025

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you would like to submit an article for the November 2024 Lexington LWV Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com by October, 25,2024.