



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

From the Convener's Desk

I am starting the new League Year with an ambitious goal of writing a message for the monthly Bulletin, and this is the first installment.

Over the summer, I attended two events celebrating the role of the African American community in the state of Massachusetts—Quock Walker Day and Negro Election Day in Salem.

Lexington resident Sean Osborne spearheaded the campaign to establish Quock Walker Day, which celebrates the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision of July 8, 1783, that found a White enslaver guilty of assault on Quock Walker, a freedom seeking Black man, and agreed with Chief Justice Cushing that the ideas of slavery and perpetual servitude were incompatible with the state constitution. The Association of Black Citizens of Lexington sponsored an early morning walk and a late morning program honoring him. A number of Lexington League members were in attendance.



LWV Salem and LWVMA members walked in the Negro Election Day parade in Salem July 15. This was the 282nd anniversary of the first known voting by Blacks in Colonial America and the first celebration as an official state holiday, recognizing the rich history of civic engagement among Massachusetts' Black communities.

Going forward, two First Friday Forums for 2023 have been scheduled. On October 6 at 9:30 AM at the Lexington Community Center, Neil Rasmussen of Save Our Heritage in Concord, MA, will provide information on the recent attempt to build new hangars at Hanscom Air Field with subsequent increase in private jet activity. (See page 3.) And on November 3, at 9:30 AM, also at the Lexington Community Center, Middlesex Attorney General Marian Ryan will be the guest speaker. The annual LWV Candidates Night is scheduled for February 15, 2024, at a location to be announced.

The Lexington League is working with local activists to place an article on the fall Warrant to determine whether Town Meeting will authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for Home Rule legislation to allow election of Town officers using Ranked Choice Voting. The LWV Lexington Board has voted to support this article based on positions of support taken by both LWVUSA and LWVMA.

The LWVMA is undertaking a new study on reparations. This is a complex issue, evoking strong opinions pro and con by members of the League as well as in American society in general. The Study will consider: Why Reparations? What is the history—and the present-day situation—which leads some to support reparations and others to oppose them? What are the different forms of reparations that have been suggested, and what are the arguments for and against each type? Should the federal government provide reparations, as some argue, or should reparations be provided only by local governments or non-governmental bodies? To be successful, the study must carefully consider the many pros and cons, before presenting the evidence and the arguments to local Leagues for their consideration. If interested in joining the State committee, contact the local League.

We will be looking for volunteers for local participation later in the year. If there is a topic of interest to you—gun control, housing, voting rights among many—consider becoming a League Envoy. Envoys follow Massachusetts legislative actions and report back to the Lexington League. Contact us for more details.

Enjoy the New England autumn.

Sincerely,

Margaret Coppe

Convener

mecoppe@gmail.com



LWV OCTOBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, October 6, 2023: Proposed Expansion at Hanscom Air Field

The Lexington League is initiating its 2023-2024 First Friday series on Friday, October 6, 2023, with a forum on the expansion of hangars at Hanscom Air Field. It will be held at the Lexington Community Center Dining Room, 39 Marrett Road, Lexington, at 9:30 AM. The guest speaker will be Neil Rasmussen, Concord resident and president of Save Our Heritage, a non-profit corporation engaged in protection of historical and natural resources in and around Concord, MA.



Rasmussen holds BS and MS degrees from MIT in Electrical Engineering. He worked at the MIT Lincoln Laboratory from 1979 to 1981, where he and two colleagues spun-off a startup company, American Power Conversion (APC). Rasmussen holds 30 patents and has published over 60 papers related to power and cooling systems, many with a focus on the improvement of energy efficiency. After APC was acquired by Schneider Electric, Inc. in 2015, Rasmussen stepped down to focus on nonprofit work, including managing the Neil and Anna Rasmussen Foundation, of which he is principal trustee. Rasmussen is currently facilitating research into the role of the human microbiome in disease, and recently founded the Center for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics at MIT.

While the League of Women Voters is non-partisan with regard to parties and individuals, it supports or opposes policy positions after research and consensus among its members. The Lexington League has supported Lexington's participation in the solution of problems associated with Hanscom Field (1978). It has opposed extension of Hanscom Field into a major airport and supported maintenance of the 1973 level of general aviation there (1988).

This program is the first in the 2023-2024 First Friday Forum series hosted by the Lexington League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. As always, it is open to the public and there will be time for Q&A. For more information go to <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/lexington/calendar>. First Fridays are a monthly forum usually held on the first Friday of every month. Programs are presented on topics of importance to Lexington residents.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

STATE LEAGUE STUDY ON THE ISSUE OF REPARATIONS

Prior to endorsing a position on important issues, the League of Women Voters at all levels conducts a formal study of the issue and then reports to the membership in a process that is intended to reach a consensus position for the League. Studies typically take two years, with the consensus process to follow in local meetings over several months.

At the LWVMA Convention in June, the state Board recommended that the Massachusetts League undertake a study of the issue of reparations during the next two years. The Board's recommendation was adopted by the delegates at the Convention. The LWVMA board will appoint a Study Committee to focus on this issue with a goal to finish the work in 2025. The Study Committee will be led by Jeanne Morrison, a member of the LWVMA Board and Co-President of LWV Cape Cod Area, and Susan Millinger, a member of the LWV Amherst Steering Committee.

Reparations are a complex issue, evoking strong opinions pro and con by members of the League as well as in American society, generally. The study will consider:

- Why reparations?
- What is the history—and the present-day situation—which leads some to support reparations?
- What arguments support those who look at the same events and oppose reparations?
- What are the arguments for and against the different forms of reparations which have been suggested?
- Should the federal government provide reparations, as some argue, or should reparations be provided only by local governments or only by non-governmental bodies?
- How would a position either in favor or in opposition to reparations meet existing League positions?
- What can the work done by the Leagues of other states contribute to LWVMA's Reparations Study?

To be successful, the study must carefully consider the many pros and cons before presenting the evidence and the arguments to the local Leagues for their consideration. League members who are interested in being considered to serve on the LWVMA Reparations Study Committee must submit their application to the LWVMA by **September 8**. The League is committed to ensuring that at least 50% of the Study Committee's members are people of color.

DEMOCRACY AT RISK PRESENTATION September 11 in Marblehead

The League of Women Voters of Marblehead and the Unitarian Universalist Church are co-sponsoring a discussion, "Democracy at Risk," with author Nancy MacLean on Monday, September 11 at 7:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 28 Mugford Street, Marblehead. MacLean, who is William H. Chafe Professor of History and Public Policy at Duke University, is the author of the award-winning book [Democracy in Chains](#) that examines the strategic campaign of the radical right to dismantle our government, eliminate unions, suppress voting, privatize education, stop action on climate change, and alter the Constitution. A New York Times bestseller, the book was a finalist for the National Book Award and received several other prizes. Learn more about MacLean's best-selling books and register at <https://www.uumarblehead.org/lectures>



Offshore Wind Webinar Series Starts September 14

Join us for the three-part webinar series What's Up with Offshore Wind? Current Status - Future Plans - Getting It Done, as we look into the Northeast's offshore wind industry. Each session has a separate Zoom registration. Sign up for one, two, or all three! Each webinar will feature guest speakers who are experts in their respective topics. Registration information can be found here: <https://lwmva.org/whats-up-with-offshore-wind/>



LWVMA ANNUAL LEAGUE LEADER LUNCH RESUMES

On Saturday, September 30, 2023, the Massachusetts League Leader Lunch resumes after a three-year hiatus during COVID. League members from around the state will gather at the Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church in Harvard, MA to enjoy a light breakfast and lunch and hear from Katharine Lange, Policy Director of the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance, who will discuss the effect of climate change on our water supply, PFAS found in drinking water, and what local Leagues are doing to work on this problem.

ADD YOUR OPINION ON THE OFFICIAL STATE SEAL AND FLAG



Would you like to offer your opinion on the redesign of the state flag and seal? [The Special Commission on the Official Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth](#) is soliciting feedback through a survey designed by UMass Boston. Complete the survey by the November deadline this link: [Umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cIQTE29dnADwfAy](https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cIQTE29dnADwfAy).

LWVMA ADVOCACY

FY24 BUDGET REFLECTS SOME LWVMA PRIORITIES

In August, Governor Healey signed the FY'24 budget for Massachusetts into law. As the budget was being prepared, the LWVMA advocated tirelessly for policy priorities that the League believes support families and children, and serve to strengthen our democracy and promote well being for the citizens of the Commonwealth. [LWVMA supported the following bills](#) that have been enacted through the budget process:

- **Universal school meals:** permanent funding for all public school students to access free breakfast and lunch
- **Lift the Cap on Kids:** 10% increase in cash assistance programs for families with children, which have not been keeping pace with the cost of living
- **In-state tuition rates for undocumented students:** provides wider access to higher education which increases the state talent pool to support a competitive economy
- **Increase in the number of family court judges:** a domestic violence prevention measure to respond to the ever-increasing caseload in family court
- **Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grants:** an investment in providing high quality, affordable and accessible early education and childcare for all MA families (Common Start)

Additionally, one of LWVMA's primary action priorities is to ensure that the [Civics Project Trust Fund](#) is adequately funded. This was achieved through a \$1.5 million line item for continued implementation of the required civics education curriculum.

The FY'24 budget also includes funding for [LWVMA policy priorities](#) which we continue to support via pending legislation including: eviction protections, regional transit authority (RTA) funding, maternal health, and net-zero climate goals.

Legislative victories to celebrate, now on to the coming legislative year. LWVMA's advocacy work does make a difference!

ACTION PRIORITY: PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

Gun Violence Prevention Advocacy Day September 13

While Massachusetts has the lowest rate of gun deaths nationwide, we are not immune from this scourge. According to the Gun Violence Archive, 387 people have been killed and more than 1,000 injured in Massachusetts in 2023. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

believes that curbing gun violence is a critical matter of public safety, public health, and public confidence. With each day that passes, more lives are lost to gun violence. The 2023 LWVMA Convention adopted ***Preventing Gun Violence as an Action Priority*** for this biennium, and the LWVMA continues its advocacy for common-sense gun laws in the Commonwealth

Representative Michael Day of Stoneham, Chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, has introduced a new omnibus bill, [**An Act to Modernize Firearm Laws, HD4220**](#), the most sweeping legislation since the gun reform bill of 2014. Conducting an 11-stop firearms listening tour throughout the Commonwealth, Representative Day was charged with writing the bill following the US Supreme Court's decision in the [Bruen](#) concealed carry case. House Speaker Ronald Mariano noted that the legislation could serve as a national model for Congress and other states.

We need the legislature to move this bill forward by scheduling a public hearing as quickly as possible. The opposition to the bill is organized, loud and fierce. Individual legislators, even though they may be pro-gun control, can count the number of constituents in opposition. Each of us needs to contact our state representative and state senator via email or phone in support of this bill. We need to flood the legislature with voices supporting this bill to counteract the actions of the gun lobby.(See contact information below.)

Join other League members on Wednesday, September 13, at 10:30 am at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 138 Tremont Street in Boston, for a Gun Violence Prevention Lobby Day. Led by the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, Stop Handgun Violence, Moms Demand Action, GIFFORDS, and Brady, we will show the legislature how gun violence prevention has widespread support throughout the Commonwealth. Register here: https://act.everytown.org/event/moms-demand-action-event/55888/signup/?_gl=1*o3x5yj*_ga*MjAxMTc5Mzg1NS4xNjkyMjc5OTM4*_ga_LT0FVV3EK3*MTY5MjI4OTM5NS4zLjEuMTY5MjI4OTQwOC4wLjAuMA..

[**Specialist Presentation: LWVMA Advocates for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, as well as Care for Vulnerable Families, September 14 on Zoom**](#)

On Thursday, September 14, at 7:00 pm on Zoom, LWVMA Specialist Palma McLaughlin will give a status report on LWVMA's support of bills addressing domestic violence, child abuse, and care for the Commonwealth's most vulnerable families. This session is one of LWVMA's ***Meet the Specialist*** series to introduce members to the hard-working League specialists who track bills in specific areas and advocate for League positions on Beacon Hill. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtcO2tqz4jEtCQbms5O8eTeAd7rhAO-MaB#/registration>

[LWVMA Supports the Campaign to End Sentences of Life Without Parole at the State House, Event at State House September 20](#)

The League of Women Voters supports the Campaign to End Life Without Parole. LWVMA Legislative specialist Nancy Bettinger is available to brief us on how punitive criminal legal system sentences are inequitable and ineffective, and how we can advocate for passage of S1045/H1821, [An Act to reduce mass incarceration](#), currently pending in the Massachusetts legislature. Join us at [Where There Is People There is Power](#) event on Wednesday, September 20, from 12 noon - 2:00 PM at the Massachusetts State House. This event is sponsored by the Campaign to End Life without Parole and We Are Joint Venture in collaboration with The Harriet Tubman Project and Mass Second Look.

[DAY ON THE HILL Wednesday, October 11](#)

After its summer break, the Massachusetts legislature is going back to work, It's time to raise our collective voice on Beacon Hill in continuing support of the League's legislative priorities. Please join us for [Act for the Future: Voting, Maternal Health, Firearms, and PFAS](#), on Wednesday, October 11, from 9:30 AM to 12 noon at the Massachusetts State House. Day on the Hill is the League's own lobby day each legislative session. This is an opportunity to be briefed on the League's agenda for the current session and to meet with your senators and representatives in person. Register at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SamFxxrv2e7KfbUyVFRpjsXPSBOo_KC5DxhOlp4XyhU/viewform?ts=64e65f48&edit_requested=true.

[LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES](#)

[LWVUS VOTER SERVICE](#)

[NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY SEPTEMBER 19,](#)

Some 300 Leagues across the country have already signed up to participate in activities on National Voter Registration Day, September 19, 2023, which will include in-person registration of voters and campaigns to encourage new and long-time voters to make certain they are registered. The League has been the biggest on-the-ground partner since the inception of NVRD as educating and encouraging voters has always been an essential part of its DNA.

VOTE411 FIELD TRAINING

Commented [WM1]:

Ahead of the 2024 national election, LWVUS will be offering trainings on all things VOTE411 to help Leagues empower and educate voters in their communities. Trainings will begin in August, 2023.

September 13, 2023, 6 pm ET – Engaging Volunteers for VOTE411: The VOTE411 and the Digital Organizing Team will share resources and tips for engaging volunteers to promote the local VOTE411 voter guide.

November 15, 2023, 6 pm ET – VOTE411 Branding and Promotions: The VOTE411 Team and the LWVUS Communications Team will share resources available for promoting local VOTE411 voter guides.

December 13, 2023, 6 pm ET – Getting More Candidates to Respond: Seven ways to get more candidate responses to your voter guide, making it more comprehensive and useful to voters.

LWVUS ADVOCACY

LWVUS ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE TRENDS WEBINAR **September 21, 2023, 3:00-4:00 PM (Eastern Time)**

Join the LWVUS Advocacy team for our annual “Legislative Trends” webinar, where we will give a comprehensive review of the legislation that was passed in the 2023 legislative sessions across the country. Discover major trends in state-level legislation, ranging from voting rights to emerging issues, and gain valuable insights to compare with developments in your own state. This webinar is for all who are interested in understanding legislative landscapes and drawing meaningful comparisons across states. Register at: <https://web.cvent.com/event/6dfca873-1530-4620-bff4-c9260c809606/regProcessStep1?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=fa41a327-6a69-4aa6-b2d4-d70aa8158508>

WOMEN’S INEQUALITY DAY

Saturday, August 26, was national Women’s Equality Day. It marks the anniversary of the certification of the 19th Amendment, which granted some women the right to vote. However, as LWVMA President Deborah Turner has noted, women in the United States now have fewer rights than they have had in decades.

Last year, the League declared this day to be **Women’s Inequality Day**, and in 2023, LWVUS has conducted a month-long digital campaign, urging Congress to protect

women's rights to vote, to ensure the Equal Rights Amendment is added to the Constitution, and to restore reproductive freedom for all. While the anniversary is past for this year, the need for advocacy continues. A copy of the League's petition to Congress appears below.

Members of Congress:

We believe that standing up for women's rights benefits all Americans. In the United States, ensuring equal representation and protection under the law are central tenets of our democracy.

While we have made significant legal and legislative advances toward sex equality in recent decades, there have also been enormous roadblocks to progress and devastating steps backward. The symptoms of systemic sex discrimination are apparent in the ongoing fights against unequal pay, workplace harassment, pregnancy discrimination, domestic violence, limited access to comprehensive health care, and more. All Americans deserve an equal opportunity to participate in our democracy. This requires equal access to voting rights, the constitutional protection of equality, and the fundamental right of the individual to make their own reproductive choices. We urge you to uphold your commitment to represent the American people by:

- 1. Protecting women's rights to vote through federal legislation.*
- 2. Affirming the validity of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and ensuring it is finally added to the US Constitution; and*
- 3. Restoring reproductive freedom for all.*

This is our wish list for women's equality.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS IN THE U.S.

League of Women Voters advocacy is not limited to contacting state and national legislators regarding pending bills. Below is a guest editorial appearing in the **Kitsap Sun** on line newspaper submitted by Mary Coltrane and Dee Anne Finken, of the League of Women Voters of Washington.

"THE IMPACT OF LOCAL NEWS ON OUR DEMOCRACY"

News of the police raid at the Marion County Record in Kansas on Aug. 11 ignited outrage across the nation. Similarly newsworthy was the announcement by the county's top prosecutor days later that he had insufficient evidence to justify the search or the seizure of the newspaper's property or material.

Few of us know much about what happens in Marion County, an hour and a half southwest of Topeka and home to fewer than 12,000 people. The last time national attention focused on that section of Kansas was in 2010, over construction of the controversial Keystone Pipeline.

Condemnation of the raid by news organizations like *The Kitsap Sun* and free-press advocates is understandable. But beyond the police action, the events of the past week or so also should remind us of the vital role local newspapers play throughout the country, serving us all.

The county's oldest newspaper, the *Record* has seen a number of owners, publishers and name changes in its 154-year lifetime. With a newsroom across the street from the Marion County Courthouse, it provides an accounting of the administration of justice in the region every Wednesday. Both its print and online pages keep readers informed about decisions by elected officials, developments in the schools and the ups and downs of local business, like recent coverage of the 50th anniversary of a local furniture store and an area dairy's award-winning cheese.

Why does this matter?

In the past 15 years, for a variety of reasons, a quarter of local newspapers nationally have gone out of business; if the trend continues, we'll have lost one-third by 2025. Washington has lost more than a fifth of its local newspapers and more than two-thirds of their newsroom staff members.

Research by the League of Women Voters of Washington as well as by scholars and others tells us local newspapers are critical to healthy communities. "[The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy](#)," which the League published earlier this year, along with reports by Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and others, have linked the loss of a community's newspaper with higher government costs, reduced voter participation, reductions in the number of candidates vying for local office, increased political polarization and less effective public health campaigns.

.When they are robust and independent, local newspapers also fulfill the vital role of watchdogs, keeping an eye on the work of government and politicians, allowing the rest of us to sleep more soundly.

The League of Women Voters is about defending democracy and empowering voters. Local news is critical to this enterprise

Mary Coltrane is president of the League of Women Voters of Washington, and Dee Anne Finken is the local news committee chair for the League of Women Voters of Washington.

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

SAVE THE DATE

September 8, 2023	Deadline to apply to serve on Reparations Study		
September 13, 2023	VOTE411 Training	6:00 pm	Zoom
September 19, 2023	National Voter Registration Day		
September 21, 2023	Legislative Trends	3:00-4:00 pm	Zoom
September 30, 2023	League Leader Lunch	Unitarian Universalist Church	
October 6, 2023	LWV First Friday Forum: Proposed Hanscom Expansion	Community Center, 9:30 am	
November 3, 2023	LWV First Friday Forum: Marian Ryan, Middlesex District Atty	Community Center, 9:30 am	
November 15, 2023	VOTE411 Training	6:00 pm	Zoom
December 13, 2023	VOTE411 Training	6:00 pm	Zoom

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 Convener, Margaret Coppe at 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 October 2023 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to September 15, 2023.

