



BULLETIN, November, 2021

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

NOVEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, NOVEMBER 19, 2021: LEXINGTON HIRES A CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER

THIS MONTH ONLY:

To accommodate participants' schedules, FIRST FRIDAY will be held on the THIRD FRIDAY in NOVEMBER, at 9:30 am on Zoom.

In July, 2021, Lexington created the new staff position of Chief Equity Officer, and appointed Martha Duffield to fill the role. We will have an opportunity to meet her at the November First Friday Forum. Ms. Duffield holds a bachelor's degree in civil and environmental engineering from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a master's degree in business administration from Simmons University. She has worked as a civil engineer for the Town of Danvers Department of Public Works. As a resident of Burlington, she serves as the President of Burlington Against Racism (BAR) and is co-founder of the Burlington Equity Coalition.

Ms. Duffield will be joined by Tanya Gisolfi-McCready, Chair of the Lexington Human Rights Committee. The HRC was instrumental in promoting the creation of the Chief Equity Officer position to advance efforts to make Lexington a more just and equitable community.

In her new position Ms. Duffield heads up the Town's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. She works with the Town's leadership, Town staff at all levels, and community leaders to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture in Lexington. She is tasked with developing strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and hopes to advance antiracism and social inclusion training opportunities for employees, boards, and committees. She also serves as the staff liaison to the Human Rights Committee and the Commission on Disability.

As always, following the panelists' presentations there will be ample time for questions from the audience.

For more information about the webinar, Zoom link, assistance using Zoom, or more information about the League, go to <http://www.lwvlexington.org/FirstFriday.html>.

This program is the second in the 2021-2022 First Friday Forum series hosted by the Lexington League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. The webinar will also be live streamed on Facebook under @LWVLexington and will be recorded and available on LexMedia at a later date.

DECEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, DECEMBER 3, 2021: COVID UPDATE WITH LEXINGTON DEPT. OF HEALTH DIRECTOR

The December First Friday Forum, at 9:30 am on Zoom, will introduce another important new Town staff member, our new Director of Public Health Joanne Belanger.

Ms. Belanger holds a bachelor's degree in health services administration from Providence College and an associate's degree in nursing from Mass. Bay Community College. She comes to Lexington from the City of Lowell, where she served as Director of Health and Human Services, overseeing five city departments, with an 80-person staff. Prior to that, she spent more than 30 years at the Town of Andover Health Department. Ms. Belanger is a registered nurse, a Certified Professional Food Manager, a Massachusetts Soil Evaluator, a Certified Pool Operator, and has training in Incident Command Structure (ICS). We'll look forward to hearing more about such a varied background.

Appointed in September 2021, Ms. Belanger is responsible for developing, managing, and assessing the comprehensive environmental health, community health, and public health emergency preparedness programs for Lexington. She will also lead Lexington's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it continues. At the December First Friday, she will tell us about her plans for the Lexington Health Department and bring us up to date on the status of COVID-19 in our Town, including testing and vaccinations, now extended to children 5-11 years old.

For more information about this webinar, the Zoom link, or assistance using Zoom, go to <http://www.lwvlexington.org/FirstFriday.html>. The webinar will also be live streamed on Facebook under @LWVLexington. The event will be recorded and available on LexMedia at a later date.

This program is the third in the 2021-2022 First Friday Forum series hosted by the League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA ADVOCACY

Current advocacy priorities for the Massachusetts League of Women Voters are:

- *Improving Elections*
- *Empowering Voters and Fostering Civic Engagement*
- *Advocating for Justice and Equality*
- *Addressing the Climate Emergency*
- *Advocating for Equitable Access to Basic Human Services.*

League specialists on Beacon Hill are following these bills as they progress through the legislative process:

- Elections and Voting: The VOTES Act [H.805/S.2545](#)
- Environment and Climate Change: [H.3302/S.2155](#) Promotes offshore wind and renewable energy
- Education: Affordable Early Education and Childcare [H.605/S.362](#) The Common Start bill
- Healthcare: Medicare for All in Massachusetts [H.1267/S.766](#)

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS ADVOCACY

NATIONAL LEAGUE LEADERS AMONG THOSE ARRESTED AT D.C. VOTERS' RIGHTS RALLY



On November 3, 2021, LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase Solomon, national Board Member Liz Bander, national Organizing Director Alma Couverthie, Maryland LWV leaders Nikki Tyree and Janet Belizzi and California LWV member Alice Smith were arrested in front of the White House, along with more than 50 other activists, for standing up and speaking out for voting rights and in support of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA). The November 3 rally was one of a series of actions that the national League has participated in as part of the NO MORE EXCUSES campaign in support of national voter rights legislation.

As of this date the U.S. Congress has failed to advance either the proposed Voting Rights Act (VRA) or the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, but the League is not giving up the fight. The last rally in the current series will be held on Wednesday, November 17. If you are able to participate either in person or on line, you can sign up here: <https://www.lwv.org/NoMoreExcuses>.

LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Ann Turner released the following statement on November 3 in response to the Senate's floor vote (50-49) against opening debate on the VRAA:

"Once again, the Senate has failed to do its job to protect the voting freedoms of all Americans. By failing to even debate the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA), senators are allowing unbridled attacks on our voting rights to continue.

"The American people demand that their government protect the freedom to vote. This morning 59 activists were arrested in front of the White House, calling on President Biden to use the full power of his office to get voting rights legislation passed. We the people will not back down until our right to vote is guaranteed. Our senators and President, who are elected — not appointed — officials, should be front and center in the fight for voting rights.

"The VRAA will restore the vital protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a law that has historically been reauthorized with bipartisan support at every opportunity. But the Voting Rights Act was stripped of its powerful anti-discrimination provisions in 2013. Without these protections, attacks on the voting freedoms of Black, Hispanic and Latinx, Native American, and AAPI voters will continue. Our democracy is not whole until discriminatory barriers to the vote are eliminated.

"The Senate must relinquish its allegiance to the Jim Crow filibuster and reform Senate rules to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act."

LWVUS EVENTS

LWVUS at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland

Representatives of the LWVUS attended the United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) in Glasgow Scotland, from Oct. 31 – Nov. 12, 2021. Eleven local League members represented the LWVUS, which joined McGill University and Human Rights Watch in presenting a seminar entitled "Disability-Inclusive Climate Action: Challenges, Opportunities & Pathways." The November 5 presentation reviewed ways to incorporate an awareness of disability rights into climate action policies, so that mitigation and

adaptation measures would be more effective, accessible and equitable at international, national and local levels. This event is the first in the 30-year history of COP to focus on disability issues in considering climate change.

The League of Women Voters declared climate change a key priority at our 2020 Annual Convention. To advance League action on this urgent issue, LWVUS has formed a nationwide collaboration effort: the [LWV Climate Interest Group](#). These League members from across the United States are working together to fight climate change. They inform each other, share information and strategies, are growing nationwide teams on subjects where there is interest, and analyze federal legislation for maximum impact.

NATIONAL CONVENTION SET FOR JUNE 23-26, 2022

LWVUS has published the first call for our 55th Annual Convention June 23 – 26, 2022. The League is trying a hybrid model this year, with opportunities to participate both in person in Denver or online from anywhere. More information can be found in the LWVUS League Update and on the LWVUS League Management Site in the coming weeks. Please email cdavis@lww.org if you have questions.

SAVE THE DATE

November 19, 2021	First Friday Forum (on Zoom)
December 3, 2021	First Friday Forum (on Zoom)
June 23-26, 2022	LWVUS National Convention, Denver, CO (and 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 the Lexington League Convener Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com.

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Commented [WM1]:

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the December, 2021 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to December 1.