



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

VOTING INFORMATION

- September 14, 2010-State Primary
- November 2, 2010- State Election
- Remember the last day to register to vote is October 13, 2010.

RIDES TO THE POLLS

For a free ride to the polls for the State Primary Election on Tuesday, September 14, and the Election on Tuesday, November 2, call the League of Women Voters of Lexington at 781-862-6498. To volunteer to drive voters to the polls, call 781-862-6498.

Bulletin Editor: Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti - Nancor1106@gmail.com

Membership: Wendy Manz - wendy_manz@yahoo.com

2010 Statewide Ballot Questions

QUESTION 1: Law Proposed by Initiative Petition

This proposed law would remove the Massachusetts sales tax on alcoholic beverages and alcohol, where the sale of such beverages and alcohol or their importation into the state is already subject to a separate excise tax under state law. The proposed law would take effect on January 1, 2011.

A YES VOTE would remove the state sales tax on alcoholic beverages and alcohol where their sale or importation into the state is subject to an excise tax under state law.

A NO VOTE would make no change in the state sales tax on alcoholic beverages and alcohol.

QUESTION 2: Law Proposed by Initiative Petition

This proposed law would repeal an existing state law that allows a qualified organization wishing to build government-subsidized housing that includes low- or moderate-income units to apply for a single comprehensive permit from a city or town's zoning board of appeals (ZBA), instead of separate permits from each local agency or official having jurisdiction over any aspect of the proposed housing. The repeal would take effect on January 1, 2011, but would not stop or otherwise affect any proposed housing that had already received both a comprehensive permit and a building permit for at least one unit.

A YES VOTE would repeal the state law allowing the issuance of a single comprehensive permit to build housing that includes low- or moderate-income units.

A NO VOTE would make no change in the state law allowing issuance of such a comprehensive permit. [The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges voters to vote no on this question. See the article below.](#)

QUESTION 3: Law Proposed by Initiative Petition

This proposed law would reduce the state sales and use tax rates (which were 6.25% as of September 2009) to 3% as of January 1, 2011. It would make the same reduction in the rate used to determine the amount to be deposited with the state Commissioner of Revenue by non-resident building contractors as security for the payment of sales and use tax on tangible personal property used in carrying out their contracts.

A YES VOTE would reduce the state sales and use tax rates to 3%.

A NO VOTE would make no change in the state sales and use tax rates.

Vote No on Question 2 to Protect Affordable Housing in Massachusetts

By Clarice Gordon, LWVMA Housing Specialist

Question 2 on the Massachusetts ballot this November 2 would repeal the state's primary affordable housing law. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges you to vote "no" on 2 to protect the affordable housing law for our seniors and working families.

This law is about fairness and equity. All families should have a choice about where to live. The affordable housing law sets a reasonable goal for each and every city and town to require at least 10% of its homes to be affordable. It encourages construction of new homes by allowing for a single comprehensive permit and flexible zoning for developers who build affordable homes.

Here are some facts about the law:

- Over the last decade, this law has been responsible for approximately **80% of the affordable homes built** outside of the Commonwealth's major cities.
- More than **58,000 homes have been created** for working families, seniors, and disabled individuals across the state.
- A repeal of the current law would immediately halt the construction of 12,000 homes in the pipeline, and all of the jobs and economic benefits they would bring.

The Vote No on 2 Campaign has come together to ensure the law is not repealed. We are a grassroots coalition of more than 350 organizations, including the League of Women Voters, and thousands of individuals committed to protecting this law. Our coalition includes civic, business, religious, and academic leaders as well as senior, environmental, housing, and civil rights groups. All three major candidates for governor agree we should all vote no to support this law.

For more info or to get involved, go to www.protectaffordablehousing.org, call 617-933-5275 or email info@protectaffordablehousing.org. And remember in November, Vote "NO on 2" to protect the affordable housing law.

[Hear more on the pros and cons of 40B on October 14 at Rep. Jay Kaufman's Open House where guests will be Tripp Jones of the Coalition to Protect the Affordable Housing Law, and John Belskis from the Coalition to Repeal Chapter 40B. 7:30 p.m. at the Depot.](#)

LWVL FORUMS:

October 1, 2010 First Friday Forum:

"What Are We Doing About Our At-risk Youth?"

Results from the 2009 "Youth Risk Behavior Survey at Lexington High School" indicated that health education continues to have a positive impact on student decision making, although parents and friends are still most important in decisions about sex and other risky behaviors. The survey also showed that stress continues to be a problem for students at LHS.

On October 1 a panel of local experts will discuss issues of at-risk youth in Lexington. Addressing the issue will be Jennifer Wolfrum, Assistant Coordinator for Health and Laurie Henry, Clinical Social Worker of Lexington's Human Services Department; and Julie Fenn, Prevention Specialist and Jim Retman, Police Resource Officer for the Lexington Public Schools.

Coffee will be available at 9:30 a.m. and presentations will begin at 9:45 in the Community Meeting Room on the lower level of Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue. The library is easily accessible by Lexpress and from the Minuteman Bikeway.

October 7, 2010 Fall Coffee:

THE THIRD RAIL: TALKING ABOUT TAXES

Representative Jay Kaufman, Chair of the Legislature's Joint Committee on Revenue is the featured speaker at the League of Women Voters of Lexington's Fall Coffee on Thursday, October 7.

Taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society (Oliver Wendell Holmes) but talking taxes is often considered the third rail of politics. We'll do it any way. What are the truths about taxes in Massachusetts? Is it possible to engage the electorate in an adult conversation about taxes, all the "no new taxes" and "waste, fraud and abuse in government" talk notwithstanding? What happens if the two tax rollback initiative petitions pass?

Everyone interested is invited to an evening of coffee and conversation at this year's Fall Coffee in the new, award-winning, Samuel Hadley Public Service Building at 201 Bedford Street from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. For more information or to carpool, contact the League at 781-862-6435. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

REPORT ON THE LWVUS NATIONAL CONVENTION 2010

Wendy Manz was the LWVL delegate to the 49th Annual Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States in Atlanta on June 12, 2010. Some 800 League members from 45 states and the District of Columbia, assembled at the Marriott Marquis Hotel to determine the LWVUS program and budget for the coming two years and consider resolutions and proposed concurrence positions from the membership.

President Mary Wilson in her out-going “state of the League” address pointed out that there are 830 active local Leagues across the country and reminded attendees that the continued health of the enterprise comes down to “members, money and media.”

A highlight of the first session was an appreciation of Ruth S. Shur, a long time League activist from New Jersey, and her family. Upon her death last year, her husband chose to honor her memory with a substantial gift to the LWVUS, sufficient to fund, in perpetuity, the training and deployment of a corps of “coaches” to help support local Leagues and membership efforts across the country.

At the second plenary session, Georgia’s U.S. Representative John Lewis recalled raising chickens as a child, facing down fear and physical violence during the civil rights era, and serving more than 20 years in Congress. His main message brought everyone to their feet more than once: what the League and the civil rights activists have had in common is the courage to stand for important principles and the persistence to keep standing for them, to keep “getting in the way.” He expects the League to keep getting in the way for the next 90 years.

PROGRAM

The LWVUS Board proposed a program for the coming year which was adopted:

- Retain current positions in the areas of Representative Government, Natural Resources, Social Policy and International Relations (as amended).
- Concurrence on amendments which add updating language to the LWVUS position on Arms Control, without deleting any of the current position.
- Undertake a two-year study on the federal role in public education.

Concurrences.

Two additional concurrences were proposed by the membership and adopted:

- Support of marriage equality for gays and lesbians
- Support of the National Popular Vote movement to override the electoral college procedure in presidential elections by means of a compact among states.

Studies.

Additional studies proposed from the floor were:

- Establishment of a cabinet level “Department of Peace” to explore non-military solutions to international conflicts
- Analysis of the financial industry
- The trend toward privatization of government functions (e.g., private prisons, charter schools, mercenary entities in war)

Only the study on the issue of privatization was adopted as a part of next year’s national program. Because the LWVUS proposed budget did not provide for this study, fundraising from the floor raised approximately \$3,500 toward the first year cost of \$10,000. Members were encouraged to send in further donations to support this study, although budget adjustments will allow it to begin this year.

TREASURER’S REPORT AND BUDGET.

The LWVUS Treasurer reported that the national organization is surviving a difficult economic climate. Previous cuts to expenditures, including reducing national staff, suspending publication of *The Voter*, and conducting a virtual Council last year rather than convening an actual meeting, have all helped balance the budget. While membership and contributions fell in recent years, contributions have increased in the past year. The League’s long term investments have recovered most of the value lost in the economic downturn. The LWVUS is in the black and improving its financial position. The Treasurer’s Report can be found on the LWVUS website www.lwv.org.

The League’s most reliable source of income, per member payments, account for approximately 32% of its budget. In light of increasing costs, the LWVUS proposed an increase of the national PMP to \$29.60 for 2010-2011 and a further increase to \$30.00 in 2011-2012. After spirited debate and a proposed amendment from the floor, the Convention voted to increase the 2010-2011 PMP to \$29.70 (the additional \$.10 to be committed to the additional study voted at Convention) and the 2011-2012 PMP to \$30.00, as proposed.

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions asked for LWVUS public support:

1. Lifting the travel ban for American citizens to visit Cuba;
2. Establishing stricter regulation and oversight for fossil fuel mining and drilling;
3. Eliminating or limiting use of the filibuster in the US Senate;
4. Adding the term “transparency” to the voting systems resolution adopted at the 2009 National Convention;
5. Supporting “improved Medicare for all,” effectively a single payer health care system;
6. Holding those responsible for the Gulf oil spill accountable for cleanup and reparations;
7. Furthering peace in the Middle East by allowing security and humanitarian aid to reach both Israelis and Palestinians.

Resolutions 1 through 6 were all adopted. Resolution 5, on health care, advocated by the Sudbury, MA League and LWVMA specialist Judy Deutsch among others, was finally passed after many years of advocacy. Resolution 7 was ruled out of order as being outside the League position.

NOMINATIONS/NEW NATIONAL BOARD

The slate for national board positions presented by the Nominations Committee, with no nominations from the floor, was accepted by acclamation, including Elisabeth MacNamara for President and Marlene O'Brien (of Wellesley, MA) as a Director/Trustee. Ms. McNamara, a trial attorney from DeKalb, GA, has served on the national Board since 2006. The entire slate of officers is available at www.lwv.org.

CONCLUSION.

At the final plenary session, Kathleen Sebelius, US Secretary of Health and Human Services, urged the League to continue to be involved in national issues and stressed that the LWVUS support for the President's health care legislation was important and appreciated. The evolution of the health care law is just beginning; we have much more work ahead.

The new LWVUS President, Elisabeth MacNamara assured us that the national organization was solvent, strong, and ready to take on the challenges of the next 90 years.

National Convention is genuinely moving and inspiring. In the third plenary, we had the pleasure of hearing from eight past presidents of the LWVUS, whose tenures stretched back to the 1970s. Not only were they strikingly impressive and articulate women, the accounts of their times in office reminded us that the League of Women Voters has a proud reputation as citizens who are informed, fair-minded and trustworthy; who "study first before taking a position," and once we take a position, have an excellent track record of being right. This applies to the national organization and to all the local Leagues, many of them small and a bit cash-strapped, who keep working away at making things better in their communities, always through the democratic process. The League makes that phrase "democratic process" real to me, and I am proud to be a part of the effort. I wish I could convey that pride and inspiration to you all more powerfully, and I hope that each of you will have occasion to attend events like this and feel it firsthand! Thank you for giving me the opportunity!

Wendy Manz

LWVL Dates to Save:

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October 7, 2010 Fall Coffee:

THE THIRD RAIL: TALKING ABOUT TAXES



League of Women Voters of Lexington
P. O. Box 233
Lexington, MA 02420-0003