



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION

LWVL January First Friday

League Forum: Yes for Our Schools

On January 24 Lexington's citizens will be asked to vote on a debt exclusion for the renovation of the Bowman and Bridge Schools and replacement of Estabrook School. The League of Women Voters of Lexington's First Friday Forum on **January 6** is an opportunity for the community to learn more about the projects – the necessity and the costs.

Panelists will include Selectman Deb Mauger; Bill Hurley of Capital Expenditures; Director of Public Facilities Pat Goddard; and Deborah Rourke, parent, life-long resident of Lexington, and member of the "Yes for Our Schools" committee.

This is the fourth in a series of 2011-2012 First Friday Forums hosted by the League of Women Voters of Lexington to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Coffee will be available at 9:15 a.m. and presentations will begin at 9:30 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. For more information or to carpool, contact the League at 781-862-6435. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

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LWVL Debt Exclusion Information Session January 12 at Clarke Middle School

Get Informed About the Upcoming Vote on Our Schools

Learn about the upcoming vote on Lexington school renovations and construction at the League of Women Voters' information session at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, at the Clarke Middle School, 17 Stedman Road.

What's a debt exclusion? What are we getting for our investment? Hear from a member of the Board of Selectmen, the Director of Facilities Maintenance and members of the YES and NO campaigns. Get the full picture.

For more information, contact the League at 781-862-7730. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

League Endorses the Yes for Our Schools Campaign

On January 24, there is going to be an important election in Lexington that will affect Lexington's public schools. The Lexington community will be asked to vote for debt exclusions to finance the renovation of Bridge and Bowman schools and the replacement of Estabrook School. These are practical, vital projects that are needed to provide safe, secure learning environments for all of Lexington's children. You can learn more about these projects and the election at www.yes4ourschools.org.

Your help is urgently needed to help pass these debt exclusion questions. **The League has endorsed the Yes for Our Schools campaign as an organization, but you can make a difference by endorsing the campaign as an individual.** When you endorse the campaign, your name will appear on the campaign's website and other literature with the names of other endorsers. Every new name makes the campaign that much stronger and more persuasive to other voters.

To endorse, please fill out the form at <http://www.yes4ourschools.org/endorse.php> . It takes only a minute, so please consider endorsing now if you haven't done so.

Thank you for supporting our schools. And don't forget to vote YES on both questions on January 24!

LWVMA

LWVMA Calendar

January 23: LWVMA Board Meeting, Noon-2 pm, 133 Portland Street
February 15: Last day to register to vote and change party enrollment for Presidential
Primaries
March 6: Presidential Primary Election
May 5: LWVMA Council

Save the Date for LWVMA Council

The November League Leader Update included a short survey on the theme and workshop topics for the upcoming LWVMA Council on May 5. Based on the response to the survey, the theme will be "Challenges to Democracy: Protecting Voter Rights and the Influence of Money."

The most popular choices for workshop topics were "Multi-League Candidate Nights (Congressional Races)," "How to work with your legislator and LWVMA's current issues," and "Share the success--membership and leadership." The Council planning committee will do their best to focus on these topics for workshops.

Council will feature morning workshops, lunch and a keynote speaker and an afternoon plenary session. The likely venue will be Lasell College in Newton; look for more details on location and specific times as we get closer to May 5.

Please plan with your League to send members to Council.

LWVMA Legislative Update

HB 338 - An Act to Provide Improved Medicare for All and SB 501 - An Act Establishing Medicare for all in Massachusetts: Testimony in support of these bills was provided to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing on 12/15 by Health Care Specialist, Judy Deutsch.

HB 1228 - An Act to Establish a Public Health Insurance Option and SB 500 - An Act Establishing a Public Health Insurance Option: Testimony in support of these bills was provided to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing on 12/15 by Health Care Specialist, Judy Deutsch.

SB 772 - A Resolution Restoring Free Speech: The LWVMA Board voted unanimously on December 12 to support this Resolution that calls upon the United States Congress to pass and send to the states for ratification a constitutional amendment to restore First Amendment rights, which were designed to protect the free speech of people - not corporations - in response to the United States Supreme Court's ruling in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission, which overturned longstanding precedent prohibiting corporations from spending their general treasury funds in our elections. This Resolution is currently in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and has not yet been assigned a hearing date.

Donating to LWVMA

A special thanks to all of the local Leagues and their members who participated in the LWVMA Phonathon. We continue to receive donations and will report on the amount raised in a future Update. Year-end contributions can be made by check and mailed to the office. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the Citizen Education Fund (make checks payable to LWVMA Citizen Education Fund.)

IRA Charitable Rollover

If you are seventy-and-a-half (70 1/2) or older, you may be able to make direct transfers totaling up to \$100,000 per year to the LWVMA without having to count the transfers as income for federal income tax purposes. The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010 has extended the IRA Charitable Rollover through the end of 2011. Please email the lwwma@lwwma.org if you have any questions.

LWVUS Legislative Priorities

In January, the LWVUS Board of Directors will be setting the League Legislative Priorities for the upcoming year. Setting these priorities for LWVUS action at the national level is an annual responsibility for the Board. Once again, the Board is soliciting suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities from members. If you are interested in making suggestions to the Board, please consider the goals and criteria as listed below. While the LWVUS has numerous positions under which we might take action, the Board must prioritize and consider those issues where we might be able to make a difference.

According to the LWVUS Impact on Issues, the goals for setting priorities to guide the LWV advocacy work are to: (1) Enhance the League's effectiveness by concentrating resources on priority issues; (2) Build the League's credibility and visibility by projecting a focused and consistent image; (3) Ensure that the League has sufficient issue and political expertise to act knowledgeably; and (4) Enable the League to manage resources effectively. In setting legislative priorities, the Board considers the following: (1) Opportunities for the League to make an impact; (2) Program decisions made at Convention and/or Council; (3) Member interest; and (4) Resources available to manage effectively.

If you would like to make suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities, please email Advocacy Committee Chair Judy Duffy: jduffylwv@aol.com. Please indicate whether the suggestions are from an individual member, a committee, board or membership meeting. Suggestions must be received by January 15.

LWVUS Program Planning Material Online

Every two years state and local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues – this is one of the ways we remain a grassroots organization. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study, review and update or concurrence. [Here](#) is the guide to assist you in your January/February meetings on Program Planning. The deadline for submitting online program planning response forms is March 1, 2012. (The web address for the guide is <http://www.lwv.org/programplanning> if the link doesn't work.)

The League of Women Voters of Arlington, Lexington and Winchester will be holding a program planning meeting in February. Watch for the final date and plan to attend.

LWVUS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear League Leader:

The end of a very busy year is approaching and offers lots of opportunity to reflect on the work that we have done and the work ahead.

I'd like to focus on the work ahead simply because of its urgency. Many state legislatures have managed to make it more difficult for citizens to vote in the upcoming 2012 elections. This week, the Attorney General of the United States finally acknowledged what we, in the League, have known for a long time. Voting rights are being undermined in a variety of ways in a majority of the states. The time for action is now if we want the 2012 election to be fair.

Whatever course the Department of Justice takes over the next few months, we know that state legislatures will be coming back into session next year, and efforts will be renewed to require voter ID, curb early voting and discourage groups like the League from registering voters. We, who understand the importance of full participation, must continue to oppose these efforts in every way possible. Whatever barriers the states throw up, we must work to overcome them. We know this is an organized effort, but regardless of who is behind it or what is motivating it, we must be just as organized and just as determined to make the process work for every voter and to make every vote count.

This past year, the League has been very involved in "protecting the voter" activities in various capacities. In mid-November, I was on Capitol Hill to speak about the impact of 2011 state-passed voting legislation. If you missed it, you may view my testimony here: <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/StateVo>

This final message for 2011, then, is a call to arms to all Leagues! Let's roll up our sleeves and do the valuable work for which we are best known and best qualified. Let's get out and register new voters, provide Voters' Guides, participate in VOTE411, host candidate debates and forums, and mobilize voters for the 2012 elections!

In League,
Elisabeth MacNamara

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the January 2012 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at Nancor1106@gmail.com by January 26th.

Dates to Save:

- January 6 LWVL First Friday - Yes For Our Schools
- January 12 LWVL Debt Exclusion Information Session
Clarke Middle School
- January 24 Debt Exclusion Referendum Vote
- February 3 LWVL First Friday – The Library in the 21st Century

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2012!



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