



The Mass. League Voter

A newsletter for members of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

April 2012

Come to Council! Saturday, May 5

You are cordially invited to attend the LWVMA Council 2012 "Challenges to Democracy: Protecting Voter Rights and the Influence of Money." All members are welcome. Please join us on Saturday, May 5, in the Winslow Academic Center of Lasell College, 1844 Commonwealth Avenue in Newton. This year's keynote speaker will be State Treasurer Steven Grossman.

The registration fee is \$45. Please fill out and mail in the registration form by April 20. Each League is allowed two voting delegates. Additional members are welcome to attend all events as an observer. Local Leagues are encouraged to send as many observers as possible. If you are your League's contact person, please fill out the credential form which is also due by April 20. We need 50 delegates from 16 local Leagues to make quorum. Please send your registration forms on time so we can ensure we have quorum and order enough food. A Council Workbook with the proposed budget and annual reports will be emailed to those attending.

Here's the schedule for the day:

- 9:30-10:00:** Early Registration for Presidents and Field Service Representatives
- 10:00-10:30:** Presidents and Field Service Representatives Meet and Greet
- 10:00:** General Registration

PROGRAM

1. Welcome and introductions (**10:30-10:45**)
2. Workshop Session 1 (**10:45-11:30**) (Choose one)
 - A. Communicating with state legislators on League issues
 - B. Roundtable discussion: membership and leadership ideas that worked
3. Workshop Session 2 (**11:45-12:30**) (Choose one)
 - A. Multi-League candidate forums
 - B. League best practices
4. Lunch and keynote speaker (**12:45-2:00**)
5. Plenary: budget and program, honors, Local League gifts (**2:00-3:30**)

Please contact [Natalie](#) with any questions or call 617-523-2999.

Be an Activist at Day on the Hill

The League's annual lobbying day at the State House is Wednesday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to noon. Lobbying the state legislature is one of the defining activities of the League of Women Voters, and everyone who shows up in person makes an enormous difference in the success of our legislative efforts. Get together with friends in your League and plan to participate.

"Democracy in Danger: Money, Media and Manipulation" is the theme of this year's Day on the Hill. Scheduled speakers are Pam Wilmot, Executive Director of Common Cause Massachusetts; Jay Kaufman, MA State Representative; and Robert Kuttner, author and

Boston Globe columnist. The program will also include presentations from the state League's legislative specialists on key pending legislation.

Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. in the Gardner Auditorium of the State House.

After our program, plan to meet with your Senators and Representatives. We will distribute details on the bills and specific talking points on our website and by email soon.

Under Construction

A new website for the Massachusetts League is in the works. We hope to finish the project over the summer so it is up and running in time for the fall election season.

We especially want to recognize and celebrate our local Leagues. The LWVMA communications committee is starting a collection of photos of local Leagues in action. We would love to receive photos from your events, especially showing LWV signs, banners, and members engaged with the community and each other. We are setting up ways that you can submit the photos to us, but for now think about selecting 5-10 photos of your League and email them to [Natalie](#). Don't forget to identify everyone!

At the National Level

Massachusetts League members don't limit their activities to the local and state levels. We also have some members performing valuable service at the national level.

Marcia Hirshberg, immediate past president of the state League, was just named one of 15 new members of the Ruth S. Shur Fellow national coaching team, a group of 23 League veterans working as national coaches to strengthen the League. Marcia has been a national coach for about two years and loves coaching because of the wonderful, intelligent people with whom she collaborates. Marcia is a member of the Westwood-Walpole League.

The National Coaching Team, also known as the Ruth S. Shur Fellows, has been made possible by a generous financial contribution to the LWV Education Fund from League member Walter Shur, of Pittsboro, NC, in memory of his wife Ruth. His gift created and sustains the Ruth S. Shur Leadership Institute, a national coaching team that will support and strengthen emerging League leadership, membership recruitment and League visibility and best practices.

Marlene O'Brien has served as an elected member of the LWVUS board of directors and LWVEF board of trustees for the past two years. She currently chairs the LWVUS board's bylaws committee and serves on its governance, resolutions, advocacy, and development committees, among others.

Before joining the national boards, Marlene had served as an LWVMA vice president and chaired its governance and nominating committees. She continues to serve on the LWVMA governance committee alongside its five other original members, including Lynn Cohen, Fran O'Leary, Pat Lieberson, Claire Russell and Muriel Zaginailoff. A former president of the LWV of Wellesley, Marlene looks forward to celebrating her local League's forthcoming 75th anniversary.

Sanford Ostroy, a member of the Board of the Brookline League, served on the eight-member LWVUS study committee on the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education." This education study was authorized at the June 2010 LWVUS convention.

Service on the committee involved research to obtain objective background information on education issues, development of informational papers on these issues and a critical evaluation of the consensus opinions to help the LWVUS Board develop representative positions. Consensus meetings were held by 377 local Leagues. The suggested positions for the LWVUS will be presented for a vote at the June 2012 convention. Those positions can be found on the [LWVUS website](#).

For the Brookline League, Sanford and Susan Donahue, as co-chairs of the Education Committee, helped to reorganize the current education positions of the Brookline League so that they would be more relevant to current situations, organized an informational meeting on the Common Core State Standards and organized and conducted a consensus meeting on the questions in the LWVUS study. Sanford continues to be active in the Brookline League, acting as a Precinct Coordinator for the Voters Guide in the past three years and for the upcoming local election.

Registering the Newest Voters

LWVMA urges all local Leagues to head into the high schools in a League voter registration drive during the month of May and register students to vote as part of the national LWV Power the Vote effort.

We are asking local Leagues to contact their town's high school(s) and arrange a day and time for a team of League members to come in. If your League would also like to register kids in high schools in adjacent towns which don't have a League, that would be great.

If you need information on how to do a high school voter registration event, contact [Nancy Brumback](#). And be sure to let the voter service committee know how many kids you registered at each school, so we can publicize our efforts.

Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012

Concerned about the big spending in the 2012 political campaigns? Is money putting our democracy at risk?

Hear a panel of experts on this issue: Lawrence Lessig, Roy L. Furman Professor of Law and Leadership, Harvard Law School, and Director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University; Jeff Clements, attorney and author of *Corporations Are Not People*; and Mimi Marziani, Counsel for the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice, New York University School of Law.

They will speak at a public forum, *Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012*, Thursday, May 17, 7:30-9:30 p.m., at the Concord-Carlisle High School, 500 Walden Street, Concord.

Moderating the conversation will be Tom Ashbrook, Host of *On Point*, a production of 90.9 WBUR, Boston's NPR news station. The forum is free and open to the public, with doors opening at 7:00 p.m. No reserved seating.

Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012 is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle (LWVCC), the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, and 90.9 WBUR. It is part of a LWVCC project, *Democracy in the Balance: Money, Speech & Power*. For more information about the May 17 public forum, contact PushingBack@lwvcc.org or 978-254-1598.

The Bottle Bill, E-Waste and Other Legislative Actions

The Updated Bottle Bill: HB 890; SB1650

On March 20, the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee decided to extend it rather than report it favorably out of committee. An extension is better than an unfavorable report or 'study status.' It gives advocates more time to push for a vote during this legislative session. However, this is a repeat of what happened last session, leaving one to wonder just what isn't understood about this bill after over 15 years of consideration.

E-Waste Bill: SB 2078

The E-Waste Bill was reported favorably out of committee and into Senate Ways and Means in November. Representatives of the major advocacy groups working for passage of E-Waste legislation met in early March to identify key elements that all agreed were critical to strong E-waste legislation. A letter signed by all major supporting organizations, including LWVMA, was sent to Senate Ways and Means urging revisions that will strengthen the bill based on their analysis, expert knowledge and broad experience.

The E-Waste bill has passed one hurdle by moving from committee to Senate Ways and Means. The main objective now is making sure that a strong E-Waste bill makes it to the floor for a vote during this legislative session. To date, 182 municipalities have passed resolutions in support of strong E-Waste legislation.

Other Legislation:

The following bills supported by LWVMA have received positive votes from the initial Joint Committee and have been referred to House Ways & Means for financial review:

HB 1858 - An Act to promote Financial Stability and Asset Development, which establishes certain financial benefits to individuals and families receiving state assistance.

HB 84/SB 34 - An Act to bring Child Support Home, which makes technical changes to regulations regarding child support payments.

The following bills supported by LWVMA have received positive votes from the initial Joint Committee and have been referred to Senate Ways & Means for financial review:

SB 2173 - An Act Preventing Students from Dropping out of School, which raises the dropout age to 18 (prior SB 185).

SB 2079 - An Act for a Competitive Economy through Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals (prior HB 1136/SB 397)

The following bills supported by LWVMA have received positive votes from the initial Joint Committee and will proceed to the appropriate chamber for a vote:

HB196 - An Act to Ensure Secure Voting Equipment, which mandates all electronic voting systems use a paper ballot and have manual audit capabilities.

SB 313 - An Act to Establish Risk-based Audits of Election Results.

The following bills supported by LWVMA have an order to extend review by the initial Joint Committee.

SB 304 - An Act Relative to Disclosure of Political Spending.

HB1173/SB413 - An Act Providing for Equitable Coverage in Disability Policies.

Once again, several bills supported by LWVMA have been referred for study, effectively killing them for this legislative session, including bills dealing with stricter gun control laws, age-specific health education, gender equality in insurance policies, guidelines for political spending by corporations and establishing Election Day voter registration.

LWVMA Wants YOU!

Spring is here, and now is the time to think about stretching your wings and trying something new. Fortunately, League members seeking a fresh challenge don't have to look far. This year, the LWVMA Nominating Committee is helping League members from around the state learn how they can make a difference on a whole new level...the state level!

Many current volunteer positions with LWVMA are listed below, and members with **legal, accounting, finance, investment, management** and **development backgrounds** are always needed to help our organization thrive.

Remember, LWVMA needs you! Check out these opportunities and then email or call the listed contacts, the [Nominating Committee](#), or a LWVMA Board member.

Finance Committee Members. Review and update LWVMA's financial policies and procedures. Periodically review the financial reports as to the best utilization of investment instruments available to increase earnings, and make recommendations to the Board. Meets quarterly by email or conference call. Looking for someone with a financial background and/or a past/present local League treasurer. Contact [Elizabeth Handler](#)

Development Committee and Volunteers. Help with a new LWVMA development plan, including projects for annual giving, major gifts and planned giving. Join the committee, help out with a short-term project, craft effective communications, host an event, or volunteer in other ways. To start, the committee will meet monthly by phone or in person. This committee has a place for League members who can offer input, ideas and suggestions, for members who can research (online and by phone) development practices of other organizations (including LWVs), and for members who can implement segments of the development plan. We also welcome volunteers who may not want to commit to being a committee member to help on a time-limited basis with one-time events or programs. Development background not required. Contact [Anne Borg](#)

Legislative Director. Promote LWVMA's program through advocacy. Serve on the Program and Action Committee. Support the Program Specialists in recommending legislation to support or oppose, attend legislative hearings and sometimes testify, provide updates on the status of bills, plan lobbying activities, involve local League members in advocacy efforts, and organize Day on the Hill. Contact [Carole Pelchat](#)

Program Specialists. When possible, attend monthly morning Program and Action Committee meetings held at the League office in Boston. When necessary, respond to requests for action via email. Research pending legislation for LWVMA support or opposition, prepare and present testimony to legislative committees, develop and maintain contacts with organizations and coalitions with similar interests, develop and maintain contact with legislators on Beacon Hill. Time commitment varies with activities during the 2-year legislative process and number of bills being followed. Contact [Carole Pelchat](#)

- **Good Governance Specialist.** Follow state legislation on topics such as campaign

finance reform and open meeting laws, recommend and initiate LWVMA action.

- **Child Protection Specialist.** Follow state legislation on topics related to children's safety, recommend and initiate LWVMA action.

Membership and Local League Services. Work with local Leagues on programs that support and increase communication among local Leagues, including the Field Service program, Leaders events and training, and membership events such as Council and Convention. We are seeking one or two new **Field Service Representatives or Co-Representatives** to help support local Leagues. Contact [Karen Price](#). The Membership and Leadership Development program, which helps local Leagues recruit and engage members and develop leaders through coaching, is seeking members to become **State Coaches**. Contact [Pam Holland](#). Membership and Local League Services have monthly teleconferences, and subcommittees may have teleconferences more frequently.

If you'd like to talk generally about what's happening at LWVMA and your interests, please contact a Nominating Committee member: [Erin Pastuszenski](#) (Concord-Carlisle), [Florence Seldin](#) (Cape Cod Area) and [Terry Yoffie](#) (Newton).