



MASS. LEAGUE VOTER

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MASSACHUSETTS

October 2015

CALENDAR

Sunday, Nov. 1	Annual Phonathon Fundraiser Kick Off
Friday, Nov. 20	LWVMA Board Meeting, Concord Public Library, Concord, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 9	Day on the Hill, Massachusetts State House, Boston, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

A Word From Our Co-Presidents

Another busy League year is well underway. We know that local Leagues are reaching out to their communities with public forums, registering voters, and, in cities that hold elections Nov. 3, informing voters through candidates' nights and voters' guides. This is League work at its best!

We encourage you to participate in the League's work at the state and national levels as well.

The national League is conducting two important studies right now, on the process for amending the U.S. Constitution and on Money in Politics. You'll find more information below, and we hope you will be a part of the study and consensus process, the key to developing positions that allow the League to take action.

At the state level, LWVMA is actively working on many bills in the legislature. To reinforce the League's clout on Beacon Hill, please contact your legislators when you receive Action Alerts on bills, and plan to attend Day on the Hill Feb. 9.

Finally, our Fall Appeal and Phonathon, our largest fundraiser, is in progress. Your donations enable both LWVMA and the Scharfman Citizen Education Fund to fulfill our mission to provide high quality voter education and citizen engagement programs. We are counting on your help!

Have a great year!

Anne

Jean

HAPPENING NOW

Vote411.org Coming to Massachusetts

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts will implement Vote411.org for the 2016 calendar year. **VOTE411.org Online Voters' Guide**, a customizable digital resource developed by the national League of Women

Voters (LWVUS), will allow Massachusetts voters to access personalized ballot information - for statewide races, state legislative races, and U.S. Congressional races - simply by entering a street address. Voters will also be able to access in-depth information about candidates (including candidates' responses to questions created by LWVMA) and ballot measures, an online voter registration tool, local and state voting requirements and rules, a polling place finder, and videos of candidate debates.



LWVMA will make this service available across the state for all national, legislative, and municipal races, at no cost to local Leagues, thanks to a generous gift from a Concord member. [Read more...](#)

Our Work Depends on Your Donations

LWVMA's Fall Appeal drive is almost over, and we'd like to thank our early donors for their generous support. If you haven't yet donated, please remember: **Donations to LWVMA and/or our Citizen Education Fund received by Oct. 30 will also benefit your local League:** For donations of \$100 or more, your local League will receive 15% of your donation; for donations of less than \$100, your local League will receive 10%. [Please click here to donate online](#) and [click here to print out a mail-in form](#)



Our annual Phonathon fundraiser will kick off next month. Several local Leagues

have already volunteered to make calls-will yours? This is another win-win opportunity for local Leagues. Your League will earn 10% of the contributions solicited by your team. If your League would like to participate, please contact [Brynne Gorman](#). *Thank you for your support!*

Make Your Opinion Count on National Studies

Local Leagues and League members across the state are taking part in two national LWVUS studies this fall and winter. The process began at the national League convention which adopted a study on the Constitutional Amendment process and an update to our campaign finance positions, under the umbrella topic "Structures of Democracy."

Why do Leagues do studies? It is a process unique to LWV. We consider all sides of an issue, then reach member consensus leading to the development of positions on issues. This thoughtful process sets us apart and helps us retain our respected reputation.

Local League's role in the process starts with the board/steering committee deciding which studies to take part in and finding members to plan these meetings. [Read more...](#)

ADVOCACY

Day on the Hill is Feb. 9

Please save **Tuesday, Feb. 9**, for a trip to the State House in Boston to participate in the League's annual Day on the Hill lobby day (snow date is Tuesday, Feb. 23) from 10 a.m. to noon. Nothing impresses legislators more than a personal visit from a constituent, so your presence and a visit to your Senator and Representative will greatly help promote the League's legislative agenda.



Day on the Hill is early this year because, in the second year of the legislative session, most bills are dead for the session if they are not reported out of committee by mid-March, so we need to let legislators know we want action on specific bills before it is too late.

How to Respond to an Action Alert

As the legislature begins to report bills out of committees for votes on the floor, you will be getting Action Alerts from LWVMA when a bill we are following needs an added push.



Please take a few minutes to contact your legislators when you get an Action Alert. That effort can help with the bill and greatly influences the League's impact on Beacon Hill.

In most cases, all you need to do is to register your support or opposition to the specific bill; you do not need to debate or explain the fine points of the bill. Just call your legislators' offices or send an email, and tell them how you want them to vote on the specific bill. Be sure to include your name and street address in any email. You can find the names and contact information for your Senator and Representative [here](#).

Why the League is Focusing on Criminal Justice

You may have noticed that LWVMA is following an unusually large number of criminal justice reform bills this legislative session. While we have strong positions on criminal justice reform that were developed in the 1970s and 1980s and have supported reform bills in the past, those bills have rarely, if ever, passed in the legislature.

But this session is different. Awareness is growing, both nationally and on the state level, of the desperate need to address the issue of mass incarceration, its effects, and the entire way our criminal justice system works. There is a sense in the legislature, and among groups that closely follow it, that legislators in this session will quite likely step up and pass reforms. How significant the reforms are will be influenced by the lobbying of groups like the LWVMA. Please watch for and respond to upcoming Action Alerts as these bills move through the process. [Read more...](#)

AROUND THE LEAGUE

Latest Scharfman Grant Winners

Congratulations to nine Leagues awarded Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grants in October—a record number! The grants, to Leagues in Brookline, Harvard, Needham, Newton, Plymouth, Sudbury, Waltham, Wellesley and Winchester,

totaled \$2,235.

For a full description of the nine winning projects, [Read more....](#)

LWVUS Grants Available for Youth Voter Registration

LWVEF, the national League educational foundation, is offering a new pass-through grant opportunity to help Leagues register and engage high school/community college/technical/vocational school students in the spring of 2016. The application deadline is Friday, Dec. 4. State and local Leagues are encouraged to [download](#) the project description and funding application. If you have questions about completing your application, contact [Maggie Bush](#).

The Mass. League Voter is distributed to all LWVMA members. Anyone can request the Voter by clicking [here](#). Please review this Update for articles of interest to your League and include them in your local Bulletin.

133 Portland Street Boston, MA 02114 | 617-523-2999
lwvma@lwvma.org | www.lwvma.org