



## **Local League talking points on gun safety legislation For use at committee hearings**

It is LWVMA's understanding that the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security intends to write a gun safety bill based on the many bills filed this session and the input from five public hearings being held across the state. The first hearing was held on June 7 at Cape Cod Community College and was attended by local League members. That hearing was well-attended and orderly, marked by civil exchanges on both sides.

It is extremely important for the League's voice be heard at these hearings. Therefore, to support League members in communicating the League's concerns, LWVMA's legislative specialist Carolyn Lee has prepared a careful review of the multiple bills introduced in the current legislative session and League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) and LWVUS positions on gun control. She has worked in conjunction with the Mass Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence and determined that the following components are essential to achieving the goal of decreased gun violence in our state:

- Universal and effective background checks - There are ample statistics from many sources showing that in Massachusetts, as well as in the rest of the nation, these have strong public support. For these to be effective, however, legislation must bring Massachusetts into compliance with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), passed in 2007. We strongly urge no exceptions to background checks. Background checks for all gun purchases no matter where, when or how transacted must be mandatory.
- Changes to reporting systems, including mental health records from all institutions, with appropriate controls to assure the privacy of the client and in a way that prevents release of any more than the minimally-required information
- Better controls to prevent so-called straw purchases (i.e. when a person with a clean background purchases firearms specifically on behalf of a person prohibited from purchasing a firearm), including limiting the number of purchases an individual may make. Such controls would help reduce urban violence. Proposed legislation should take into consideration victims of domestic abuse who are forced to choose between buying a gun which could lead to violence or being further abused.
- Detention for presumed dangerousness for a felony involving the use of a firearm
- Improvements to the existing assault weapons ban, the limitations on magazine size, and the ending of grandfather clauses
- Allowing police to destroy instead of reselling weapons and ammunition
- Stiffer penalties for individuals circumventing gun control laws

We believe that most elements of the Governor's bill, H.47, address the issues effectively. The limitation of "possession, storage and use of assault weapons, large capacity weapons..." to properly licensed gun clubs and their use only by members with a valid firearm identification card or those being supervised by a certified firearms safety instructor and a requirement for liability insurance proposed in Rep. Linsky's bill, H.3253, should also be given serious consideration.

6/24/2013