



League of Women Voters®

Massachusetts

League Leader Update

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Calendar

Friday, Dec 20	LWVMA Board Meeting, 11am - 2pm, LWVMA office
Wednesday, Jan 8	Field Service Meeting Southeast Region/Cape and Island, 10:30am-1:30pm, Falmouth
Friday, Jan 10	LESF Trustee Meeting, 11am - 2pm, LWVMA office
Saturday, Jan 18	Field Service Meeting Metro SW Region, 10am-1pm, Newton
Friday, Jan 24	LWVMA Board Meeting, 11am - 2pm, LWVMA office
Monday, Feb 17	Daniel Scharfman Grant Deadline
Friday, Feb 28	LWVMA Board Meeting, 11am - 2pm, LWVMA office
Saturday, March 8	League Leaders' Lunch, 11am-3pm, Wellesley Unitarian Universalist Church
Wednesday, March 26	LWVMA Day on the Hill, MA State House

Help Set the National League Agenda

It's time for your League to have a say in the direction the national League will take. LWVUS is asking for input on its legislative priorities for the coming year and in its program planning process. Below is information from LWVUS on both of those requests for your League to consider.

National Legislative Priorities 2014 - 2015:

In January, the LWVUS Board of Directors will be setting the League Legislative Priorities for the upcoming year. The national board is soliciting suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities from

members. 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 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 opportunities for the League to make an impact; program decisions made at Convention and/or Council; member interest; and resources available to manage effectively.

If you or your League would like to make suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities, please email Advocacy Committee Chair [Toni Larson](#). Please indicate whether the suggestions are from an individual member, a committee, board or membership meeting. Suggestions must be received by **January 11**.

National Program Planning 2014 - 2016:

The [Program Planning Response Form](#) is now online! Every two years state and local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study, review and update or concurrence. Read the [Program Planning Leaders Guide](#) to assist you in your January/February 2014 Program Planning meeting. If you have questions on the program planning process please email progplan@lww.org. The deadline for program planning responses is **March 1**.

LWVUS in 2013:

What has the national League been working on in 2013? Read Elisabeth MacNamara's [blog](#) in the *Huffington Post* for "10 Ways the League of Women Voters Is Making Democracy Work in 2013."

Plan Now to Participate in the National Convention



The national League of Women Voters convention will be held in Dallas June 6-10, and the Massachusetts League board urges all of our local Leagues to consider sending a delegation. The national convention is an amazing opportunity to connect with like-minded people from around the country and to get to know people from other Massachusetts Leagues better.

LWVUS has just posted its [Guide to Convention 2014](#) which can answer your questions about how to register, how many delegates you can send, and what happens at convention. If you plan early, you can take advantage of some very good airfares to Dallas! Let's make the Massachusetts delegation one of the biggest in Texas!

Day on the Hill is March 26

The League's annual lobbying day at the State House is set for **Wednesday, March 26**.

Please encourage your members to participate. The more people who visit their legislators, the more influence the League has in such upcoming legislative areas as election reform, gun safety, campaign

finance reform and environmental issues.

Consider organizing a carpool of interested members from your League and then contact your state legislators for an appointment to discuss League-supported legislation after the morning's program ends at noon. Details on the bills, including specific talking points, will be distributed to local Leagues before Day on the Hill, so you will have the information you need to make the case with your legislators.

If you plan to invite your legislator to lunch, please schedule lunch after 1 p.m. so other Leagues in that legislator's district have a chance to talk to him or her between noon and 1pm.



Spring League Leaders' Lunch: Date Change and Location

The next League Leaders Lunch will be **Saturday, March 8** (not March 1 as previously announced) at the Wellesley Unitarian Universalist Church, 309 Washington St., Wellesley Hills from 11am to 3pm.

LWVMA Transportation Review Committee

If you would like to work on the state League's transportation Action Plan (between January and April 2014), please contact [Dee Ortnier](#).

Election 2014 Committee



Join us in planning LWVMA's role in next year's state elections-including the elections for Governor and U.S. Senator, please contact [Nancy Brumback](#). We will be considering whether we should sponsor debates and for which offices and how to encourage local Leagues to get together on Congressional candidate forums. We'll also plan for an online voters' guide to the state level races and perhaps the Congress and Senate races. We will need people to be on the planning committee, to work on any candidate forums, to draft questions for the voters' guide and to oversee candidate participation in that guide. Help!

Daniel Scharfman Grant Deadline Feb. 17

The next application deadline for the Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grant Program is Monday, Feb. 17. The grant program offers funds of up to \$250 to help Leagues carry out events and projects in the areas of citizen education and voter service. The grant deadline after February is June 2. For information, eligibility, and application [click here](#). To submit a grant application or for questions, email kprice@lwvma.org.

Learn More about a Carbon Tax

After last month's successful and provocative forum, [Pricing Carbon](#), sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Wellesley and co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA), LWV of Needham and Citizens Climate Lobby, we are encouraging members to become better informed on this topic of growing national and international interest - pricing carbon as a market-based approach to reducing carbon dioxide emissions while promoting the development and use of clean, renewable energy, and stimulating the economy through creation of new industries and jobs in the clean energy sector.

Here in Massachusetts, legislators are considering a bill, [H.2532: An Act relative to shifting from carbon emissions to transportation investment](#), that could make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to price carbon. Please go to our website, www.lwvma.org, to learn more about what this bill would do, the issues surrounding a carbon



tax, and how you can help make a difference.

Will the IRS Stop League Voter Registration Drives?



A recent announcement from the Internal Revenue Service seeking comment on a proposed rule to cover the activities of 501(c)4 corporations has caused concern that a rule could affect many of the voter service activities the League undertakes, even voter registration drives. On Dec. 5, LWVUS president Elisabeth MacNamara issued a statement to clarify the situation as it currently exists, which may help local Leagues answer questions about this proposal. You can read her statement [here](#). The LWVUS press release is [here](#).

LWVUS said "We intend to be very involved in the rulemaking process because the issues under consideration are so important to the League and to our democracy. To that end, in the future, we will be providing press templates and other guidance for state and local Leagues to use. The initial comment period ends Feb. 27, 2014, after which there would normally be a new, fully developed proposed rule and an additional comment period. If you get any calls from national media regarding this issue or process, please direct them to [Kelly Ceballos](#) at LWVUS. She is also a resource for you in responding to local media inquiries as well."

LWVMA at the Mass Conference for Women: Increasing League Visibility

LWVMA participated in the Massachusetts Conference for Women Dec. 5 at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The conference provides connections, motivation, networking, inspiration and skill building for thousands of women each year. We had many women stop at our exhibit and learn more about the work of the League. Thanks to Natalie Kassabian for preparing our booth and speaking to hundreds of interested women!



High school students taking our civics quiz, which we took questions from the US citizenship test

Consider a Donation through Your IRA in 2013

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 reinstated the "IRA charitable rollover" through the end of 2013. The law allows individuals 70½ and older to give up to \$100,000 from their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and Roth IRAs to qualified charitable organizations such as the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts' Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Citizen Education Fund without having to treat the withdrawals as taxable income. The transfer, if done properly, counts towards the taxpayer's required minimum distribution for the year, and can be of particular value to individuals who do not claim itemized deductions on their tax return because the funds are transferred directly to nonprofits from IRA accounts and are never counted as income. Every donor's circumstances are different, so please consult with your tax advisor to see if an IRA rollover is right for you.

For additional information, contact [Meryl Kessler](#) in the League office, or call 617-523-2999.

Idea of the Month: Land Use in Belmont



LWV Belmont produced a 16-page Guide to Conserving Land in Belmont. The pamphlet provides information on preserving existing open space, a brief introduction to options for conserving land for homeowners, and sources for further information. LWV Belmont printed 3,200 copies, aided by a Daniel Scharfman grant.

Happy New Year to All!