

January 2015



The Mass. League Voter

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

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CALENDAR

Wednesday, Jan. 28	"Economic Inequality and Political Participation--Whose Voice Is Heard?" forum, Bentley University, Waltham, MA from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday, February 27	LWVMA/LESF Board Meeting, Wellesley Community Center, Wellesley, MA from 10:45 until 2pm
Tuesday, April 28	Day on the Hill, the State House, Boston
Friday, May 15 - Saturday May 16	LWVMA 2015 Convention, Clarion Hotel, West Springfield, MA

Tonight's Forum on Inequality in Waltham CANCELLED

Due to yesterday's storm and its after effects, tonight's forum at Bentley University will be cancelled. We will plan to reschedule. Please check the LWVMA website shortly for details.

A Word From Our Co-Presidents

Happy New Year! The League and Scharfman boards and staff are busy working to bring members and the public some outstanding programs this winter and spring. The new legislative session is just beginning, and the advocacy team is ready to roll up their sleeves and advocate for bills that further the League's mission.



We especially want to ask for your League's help in publicizing this year's *Student Video Contest* to area high schools. Last year's contest was a resounding success, and we are eager to replicate that success.

As you read the newsletter, you will learn about the special advisory compensation commission; thank you very much to Mary Ann Ashton for stepping up to serve on this important commission. We know that you will enjoy the article about Needham members Karen Price and Debbie Winnick's trip to Cuba. And there is much more...!

Finally, we hope that you will join us in West Springfield from May 15-16 for LWVMA's 2015 Convention. You will have opportunities to learn, network, and have fun!

As we write this, a blizzard is bearing down on New England. Please stay safe and warm.

In League,

Marilyn Anne

HAPPENING NOW

Lights! Camera! Take Action! Our Second Annual Student Video Contest Kicks Off Feb. 1

LWVMA will launch its second annual student video contest February 1 with the theme "There Oughta Be Law!"

We invite Massachusetts high school students to submit two-minute videos telling their legislators what new laws should be passed in the new, two-year legislative session to help keep Massachusetts a great state. Are there prizes? YES! First place wins \$1000; second place wins \$500; and third place wins \$250.



League members are encouraged to volunteer as judges for the contest and to publicize it to high schools in your area. Click [here](#) to download and print a flyer. If you'd like to help with the contest, call 617-523-2999 or [email us](#).

Any Massachusetts high school student in grades 9-12 can enter. Entries can be submitted online at www.lwvma.org starting February 1. The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2015. Judging will take place in April, and winners will be announced in May.

Click [here](#) to see the winning entries from last year's video contest.

Plan to Attend Convention May 15-16

The 2015 LWVMA Convention, "Women Leading the Way," will be May 15-16 at the Clarion Hotel in West Springfield. **All League members are welcome to attend.**

The Convention Committee would like your input in order to plan a convention program that meets your needs. Please take a 10-minute survey by clicking [here](#).

What do we do at convention?

- Have fun!
- Participate in workshops and training
- Hear from interesting guest speakers
- Meet League members from across the state
- Find out what other Leagues in Massachusetts are doing
- Vote on the LWVMA Program for 2015-2017
- Elect officers and directors to the LWVMA board

Convention information will be posted on the LWVMA [website](#) as it becomes available, and watch for the "First Call" in February. If you have any questions on Convention 2015 please [contact the office](#) or call (617) 523-2999.

Kudos to Daniel Scharfman Grant Winners

Congratulations to the four Leagues awarded Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grants in January. The total amount dispersed in this cycle for the four grants was \$924.

The four Leagues awarded grants were:

LWV Bedford which will co-sponsor a public program this spring with *The Bedford Citizen*, a local online newspaper, on "Local Government Needs Local News"

LWV Needham for League Friday Forums

LWV Sharon-Stoughton for participation in Town of Sharon's 250th celebration

LWV Winchester sponsoring two programs, one on campaign finance reform and the other on health insurance needs of town employees.

To read more about these wonderful projects, go to the LWVMA web site and [click](#) on Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grant Program.

Grant applications are due April 6 to be considered for the next funding cycle.



Help LWVMA Win *Boston Globe* Grant

For the second year, the *Boston Globe* will be awarding grants of advertising space to non-profit organizations. If you are a *Boston Globe* subscriber, when you receive a silver envelope announcing the grant program, please consider listing the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund on your voucher. Last year, the Scharfman fund received advertising space worth \$6,800 thanks to Globe subscribers.

Online Voters' Guide a Hit

The League's online voters' guide to the candidates for the six statewide offices got 8,308 hits over the weekend through Election Day Nov. 4!

Here's the breakdown: Saturday, 502; Sunday, 839; Monday, 3,118; and Election Day 3,849.

That follows the 6,541 hits our primary election guide got going into the Sept. 9 primary election.

ADVOCACY

Kick Off the Legislative Session with Day on the Hill April 28

The 189th session of the Massachusetts General Court--the state legislature--got underway Jan. 7 beginning the two-year session that will end July 31, 2016.

Help us get a good start to our legislative efforts by attending our annual Day on the Hill lobby day, Tuesday, April 28, from 10 a.m. to noon at the State House. Nothing

impresses legislators more than a personal visit from a constituent, so your presence at Day on the Hill and a visit to your Senator and Representative will greatly help promote the League's agenda in the new session.

We will have a guest speaker and then presentations from our legislative specialists on key bills that morning, then we ask you to visit your own legislators to ask for their support on those bills.

If you haven't been to Day on the Hill before, it's a great opportunity to learn more about the League's efforts on Beacon Hill and to become part of that effort.

Legislative Specialists Hard at Work on Bills

Deciding which bills the League will support on Beacon Hill is the job of the Legislative Action Committee (LAC), made up of our legislative specialists. They are sifting through almost 6,000 bills being introduced as the session begins, and, if you have any suggestions for bills to consider, please pass them along.

Legislators are currently drafting bills and recruiting co-sponsors for those bills. About 6,000 [Read more...](#)

Guest Blog on Buffer-Zone Law

Take a look at the excellent guest blog that LWVMA Executive Director Meryl Kessler wrote for LWVUS about LWVMA's work to help pass new legislation ensuring all Massachusetts women have safe access to reproductive health services. The bill to revise the abortion clinic buffer zone protection in the wake of the Supreme Court's *McCullen* decision went through the legislature quickly last July. You can read the blog post [here](#).

Five Years after *Citizens United*



LWVMA co-president Anne Borg spoke at an event in Boston marking the fifth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision unleashing an unprecedented flood of money—often from undisclosed sources—into our political process. Read our press release [here](#).

A LONGER LOOK

With the League in Cuba

By Debbie Winnick and Karen Price, LWV Needham

Debbie Winnick and Karen Price joined a delegation to Cuba, "Sisters Across the

Straights," offered by the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund. The trip, October 13-19, provided a unique opportunity to learn more about Cuba's history, culture, and changing demographics. The trip was led by Cuban-American Annie Betancourt, LWVF board member and past Florida state representative, and included 10 other League members from around the country. We met with several women's groups and individuals, and participated in honest dialogue about this close neighbor. [Read more...](#)



Karen Price, left, and Debbie Winnick in Cuba

An Inside Look at a Massachusetts Commission



Mary Ann Ashton, LWV Acton Area, is far left.

Back in July, LWVMA was asked to recommend someone to fill the seat allotted to "a membership-based public advocacy organization with experience in matters relating to government accountability, transparency and public integrity" on the Special Advisory Commission on Compensation created by the

legislature. We suggested, and Governor Patrick appointed, Mary Ann Ashton, co-chair of the Acton Area League to the commission. Here's her report on the experience.

By Mary Ann Ashton, LWV Acton Area

All of us who enjoy our membership in the League of Women Voters recognize that it's a great organization and are grateful for the voter service, legislative advocacy, and citizen education efforts that our state League undertakes for us around Massachusetts.

Although a member for many years now, I don't think I fully appreciated the clout of the LWVMA "brand" until I was asked to submit my name for appointment to a Special Commission to Study

[Read more...](#)

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.

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133 Portland St, Boston, MA 02114 · 617.523.2999

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