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February 2015



League of Women Voters®

Massachusetts

## In This Issue

### CALENDAR HAPPENING NOW

[League Leader Lunch Focuses on Fundraising, Voter Service](#)

[Forum on Inequality Rescheduled to March 19](#)

[Student Video Contest in Full Swing!](#)

[First Call to Convention](#)

### ADVOCACY

[Transportation Committee Urges Action](#)

[Day on the Hill is April 28](#)

[LWVUS Interprets Basic Human Needs Position as Related to Wages and Income Inequality](#)

### AROUND THE LEAGUE

[18 Leagues Increased Membership in 2014!](#)

[Planning for Spring: Consider League Connections!](#)

[League Celebrates 95 Years](#)

[WEBPAGE OF THE MONTH: Event Planning Checklist](#)

## CALENDAR

Friday, Feb. 27	LWVMA/LESF Combined Board Meeting, Wellesley Community Center, Wellesley, MA from 10:45 a.m. until 2 p.m.
Saturday, March 7	League Leader Lunch, VFW Hall, Norwood, MA from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.
Thursday, March 19	"Economic Inequality and Political Participation -- Whose Voice Is Heard?" Bentley University, 174 Forest Street, Adamian Academic Center 165 (Wilder Pavilion), Waltham, MA from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m.
Tuesday, April 28	Day on the Hill, the State House, Boston, 10 a.m. until noon
Friday, May 15 - Saturday, May 16	LWVMA Convention, Clarion Hotel, West Springfield

## HAPPENING NOW

[League Leader Lunch Focuses on Fundraising, Voter](#)

## Service

The March League Leaders Lunch is scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Norwood VFW Hall, 193 Dean Street, Norwood. The cost per person is \$20, including lunch. Registration must be completed by **Tuesday, March 3**. [Click here](#) to register. You may also register by emailing [Brynne Gorman](#). Please pay in advance or at the door.



The lunch will have two focuses: **fundraising** and **voter service**. The goal is for every League to leave with at least one new idea for fundraising and one for voter service.

The fundraising portion will begin with a presentation of general fundraising principles and resources, followed by representatives from Leagues around the state presenting their successful fundraisers, and finishing with a roundtable discussion to share more fundraising ideas.

For the voter service portion: Following a presentation of resources and dealing with empty chair debates, local Leagues will present successful voter service projects, followed by a roundtable sharing voter registration successes.

We will also have a big sharing table, so plan on bringing your flyers, brochures, and other materials to share with your League colleagues.

Presidents, Steering Committee/Board Members, Membership Chairs, Events Chairs, Voter Service Chairs, Fundraising Chairs and potential leaders are especially welcome. There is **no limit** to the number of attendees per League.

We are grateful to the Norwood League for local arrangements.

For questions about the agenda email [Karen Price](#) or [Jean Cherdack](#). For questions about the registration and logistics email [Brynne Gorman](#). [Click here for a flyer](#).

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## Forum on Inequality Rescheduled to March 19

A little snow can't stop the League! Now you have a second opportunity to attend the forum "Economic Inequality and Political Participation - Whose Voice Is Heard?" co-sponsored by LWVMA and the Valente Center at Bentley University.

The forum, which was cancelled in January due to the first of our many snowstorms, has been rescheduled for **Thursday, March 19**, from 7-9 p.m. at Bentley University, 175 Forest St., Waltham, in Bentley's Wilder Pavilion (Adamian Academic Center 165).

The forum is free and open to the public, but we ask you to register to ensure sufficient seating. Please [click here](#) to let us know if you're coming and whether you're bringing guests.

In conjunction with the forum, the Valente Center will be screening *Inequality for All*, Robert Reich's award-winning documentary, tomorrow night, Thursday, February 19

at 6:30 p.m. in Bentley's Wilder Pavilion (Adamian Academic Center 165). This screening is free and open to the public, and League members are encouraged to attend.

## Student Video Contest in Full Swing!

"There Oughta Be a Law" -- or at least there oughta be a video suggesting one!

This year's second annual student video contest runs until **March 31** and asks high school students across Massachusetts to submit a two-minute video on a law the new legislative session should pass. Are there prizes? YES! First place wins \$1000; second place wins \$500; and third place wins \$250.



Local Leagues are encouraged to spread the work about the contest to high schools, public and private, in their area. [Click here](#) to download and print a flyer. [Click here](#) to access the toolkit that contains ideas for publicizing the contest in your town. 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](http://www.lwvma.org) through 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.

## First Call to Convention

You should have received the First Call to our 2015 Convention by email last week. Here's a [link](#) to that First Call; please share the information in your bulletin.

The Convention will be Friday and Saturday, May 15-16, at the Clarion Hotel in West Springfield. Look for information soon on our exciting guest speakers, the workshop topics and registration details. Convention information is also posted [here](#) on our website as it becomes available.

Your League can plan now for its one-minute Local League Showcase presentation on something you have done since last convention, and also please consider donating an item from your League or from individuals for Friday evening's silent auction.

## ADVOCACY

### Transportation Committee Urges Action



Recent MBTA shutdowns in the face of severe weather are vivid reminders of the costs of postponing maintenance and investment in essential infrastructure. LWVMA has for years advocated for adequate transportation funding and we adopted a new position supporting transportation at our 2013 Convention.

Unfortunately, the state has not kept up with predictable deterioration of trains, buses, tracks, roads and bridges, and has not improved service to keep up with demand. These transportation failures harm our personal budgets and the state's economy.

LWVMA has joined a statewide coalition, Transportation for Massachusetts or T4MA, that tracks transportation needs, policies and investments. It's clear from T4MA's [latest study](#) that we need billions of dollars of revenue to bring transportation to a state of good repair and for new service to encourage responsible growth. We must make smart reforms.

LWVMA's transportation committee urges local Leagues and members to contact your legislators directly and to write to your local newspaper asking the legislature to close the transportation funding gap, support overdue MBTA maintenance and adequate Regional Transit Authority funding, and repair roads and bridges. You can find more information at [T4MA's website](#).

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## Day on the Hill is April 28

Please encourage your members to attend LWVMA's annual lobbying day on Beacon Hill: 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.



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## LWVUS Interprets Basic Human Needs Position as Related to Wages and Income Inequality

At its January board meeting, LWVUS decided that the existing position on meeting basic human needs can be used by state and local Leagues in addressing issues of a living wage and income inequality, even though at the national level, Board and staff will continue to say that we have no member understanding and agreement as to a definition of a 'living wage' and that we cannot support a federal minimum wage. Here's the information from the Feb. 5 LWVUS League Update:

### Interpreting the Meeting Basic Human Needs Position

The (LWVUS) Board discussed the [Meeting Basic Human Needs Position](#) in relation

to income inequality. The Board determined that the position can be used in communities in "working toward an income that meets basic human needs." The committee agreed that specific issues in relation to a "living wage" and income levels should be decided by Leagues working in their communities. The Board also agreed to call attention to the Meeting Basic Human Needs Position with Leagues since it contains many elements that address current needs in communities across the country.

Questions regarding the application of this position at the state and local level may be directed to LWVUS Advocacy Chair [Chris Carson](#).

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## AROUND THE LEAGUE

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### 18 Leagues Increased Membership in 2014!

Thanks to all the Leagues--nearly 100%--that updated their rosters in the LWVUS database. The strength of the League draws from a robust membership at the local level and these Leagues deserve a shout-out for a job well done.

The following 18 Massachusetts Leagues increased their number of members this past year:

- Falmouth (12)
- Acton Area (10)
- Needham (9)
- Marion/Mattapoisett/Rochester (8)
- Norwood (7)
- Westwood/Walpole (6)
- Winchester (5)
- Lexington (4)
- Waltham (4)
- Wellesley (4)
- Other Leagues which increased their membership are Brookline, Chelmsford, Harvard, Hingham, Marblehead, Medfield, Melrose, Plymouth Area

And congratulation to LWV Arlington for being one of the three winners of the first LWVUS Roster Challenge. LWV Arlington was chosen at random from among 385 Leagues which had updated all their expiration dates in the national database by January 31.

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### Plan for Spring: Consider League Connections!



The LWVMA board and committee members are available to meet with your League to present and discuss a variety of topics. To request a board speaker on a topic, please contact [Brynne Gorman](#) in the LWVMA office. If you have a specific date or other requirements, please let her know.

For a description of possible topics and details of League Connections click [here](#).

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### League Celebrates 95 Years

The League of Women Voters celebrated its 95th anniversary on Feb. 14. The Massachusetts League's 95th birthday -- May 27 -- is not far behind!



Here's an anniversary wish from LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara:



When [Carrie Chapman Catt](#) called for a League of Women Voters to "Finish the Fight," she was talking about more than just the finishing the fight for women's suffrage. The League was founded in another gilded age when progressive activists were working to prevail over political machines and [the influence of money in politics](#). One constant refrain throughout League history has been the danger posed by big-moneyed special interests to our democracy.

Happy 95th anniversary to all of you who work so hard and care so much about our country. To Carrie Catt, a League of Women Voters was the most natural, the most patriotic memorial to the courageous women and men who fought so hard for women's suffrage. We are that League, we are that living memorial and we have much to be proud of.

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## WEBPAGE OF THE MONTH: Event Planning Checklist

As the weather warms up and the snow stops, Leagues begin their spring round of forums, candidates' nights, and other events. The national League's Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Program has created a checklist for event planning to help Leagues. This checklist drew rave reviews at last fall's League leader lunch. See if it would help with your event planning. You can [find it here](#).

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The League Leader Update is distributed to local League board members and LWVMA leaders. Anyone can request the Update 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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## Quick Links

[Donate Now](#)  
[LWVMA / LWVUS](#)  
[LWVMA Board](#)  
[LWVMA Calendar](#)



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