LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SALEM, MA

July 2018, Volume 1, No.2

“The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization of women and men, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.”

2018 Steering Committee Chairs

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LWV United States http://www.lwv.org

News, Announcements, Suggestions for Newsletter, contact Patti Morsillo pmorsillo@gmail.com
Calendar of Events

Monday July 9:  Gun Safety joint meeting with LWV Marblehead Gun Safety Study Group
6:30 pm; home of Kathy Leonard (LWV Marblehead).

Friday July 13:  Free Friday at the Edward M Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, Columbia Point, Boston
10:00 am—5:00 pm  Free admission all day

Thursday July 19:  Regular meeting of the Salem City Council
7:00 pm; City Council Chambers, City Hall

Friday July 20:  Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday July 24:  Voter Services and Civic Engagement Working Group Meeting
6:30 pm; Council on Aging, 5 Broad Street, Salem

Wednesday August 1:  Education Working Group Meeting
7:00 pm; 33 Pleasant St., Salem

Wednesday August 15:  Last day to register to vote in Preliminary Election
8:00 am—8:00 pm (extended hours); City Clerk’s office, City Hall

Tuesday September 4:  Primary Election Day
7:00 am—8:00 pm
  Ward 1, Precinct 1: Bentley Academy Charter School, 25 Memorial Drive
  Ward 1, Precinct 2: Community Room, 135 Lafayette St
  Ward 2, Precinct 1 and 2: St. Peter’s Episcopal Hall, 24 St. Peter St.
  Ward 3, Precinct 1 and 2: Salem High School Auditorium, 77 Willson St
  Ward 4, Precinct 1 and 2: Witchcraft School Gymnasium, 1 Frederick St
  Ward 5, Precinct 1 and 2: Saltonstall School Auditorium, 211 Lafayette St
  Ward 6, Precinct 1: Bates School, 53 Liberty Hill Ave
  Ward 6, Precinct 2: Park & Recreation Dept., Mack Park
  Ward 7, Precinct 1 and 2: Salem State Enterprise Center, 121 Loring Ave
We Are Taking Action!

Pride!
The League of Women Voters was thrilled to participate in the North Shore Pride Parade on June 23, 2018. We were sporting our rainbow sashes, with “VOTES FOR ALL” written on them, an updated version of the original suffragette sashes. We were also carrying our new League of Women Voters banner, gifted to us by the state League. We plan to put the banner to good use around the community.

Voter Registration
Special thanks to Claudia Lyons for organizing the Voter Registration Drive during the 4th of July festivities at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site. Volunteers included Judith Reilly, Elizabeth Clouse, Shelly Stuler, Eileen Schultz, Christine Ross, Joyce Maroney, and Stephanie Cooper.
The Steering Committee met on Friday June 15, 2018. The following items were discussed:

- Officially, we have 27 members!
- Beginning in 2019, the state LWV will not charge for student members. The Steering Committee decided to change the student membership $10, with the money held by the Salem unit. Student membership includes high school, college, vocational, and volunteer years (City Year, Americorps, etc).
- We discussed a Communications Strategy for the organization.
  
  * For Letters to the Editor, members must make sure it is in line with the league messages/positions, and there must be consensus among the Steering Committee with the message. According to League guidelines, the unit Convener (Jen) must be on all group statements. Letters to the Editor from members must therefore get approval from the committee before sending to a newspaper. Moving forward, we will work through this policy and make adjustments.
  
  * Addressing the city council will be done by the Convener/Spokesperson (Jen). Comments must fall within the posted agenda. And due consideration should be made to determine the best venue for statements and comments: city council directly, letters to the editor, newsletter, etc.
  
  * We discussed handling emails in the generic LWV of Salem gmail account (lwvsalem@gmail.com), in order to ensure a timely response.

- Updates of each of the working groups were made (see further in newsletter).
- Jen agreed to make interim email updates, to remind members of upcoming working group dates, events, and information on legislative action.
- There was interest in helping people in jail to vote. The Voter Services group will follow-up.
- The LWV holds field meetings every 6 months at the regional level. Jen and Judith attended.
  
  * The League has switched to a new website for nonpartisan voter information: www.ballotready.org. The site is designed to give the user information on every race and candidate on the ballot, from national to local. You can sign up to receive information on your local ballot and receive their newsletter.
  
  * Jen and Judith agreed to collect questions from Salem residents for all candidates on the November ballot. The committee will collect all questions, then whittle them down and send them to the candidates. Their responses will then be on the above website for voters to review before voting.
  
  * The League is studying the Citizen Petition Process. Our unit has agreed to participate in the study, beginning in December.

Primary Election Day is
Tuesday September 4
(the day after Labor Day)
Voter Services and Civic Engagement

The Voter Services and Civic Engagement working group had a wonderfully productive and successful kick-off meeting on Saturday June 2.

Thank you to Lori Marenda-Lang and everyone who contributed to the success of the Salem High School Voter Registration Drive on May 22. Forty-seven students were registered! Plans are being made to hold registration at Salem High in early fall. Tricia Arrington will work with the Salem Academy Charter School to hold a Voter Registration Drive there as well, possibly partnering with a student working on their civic service requirement. Connections need to be made at the New Liberty Innovation School as well, to set up voter registration.

The group discussed potential areas of interest/involvement:

Conduct research into voting barriers—There are some efforts underway in a variety of communities to identify and work to correct voting barriers in Salem.

- Judith will be working on finding ways to work with Salem State University on new student issues (confusion about voting changes or absentee balloting, for example), touching base with the Council on Aging to help alleviate barriers for the elderly, and working with the Salem Youth Commission about ways to work together.
- Ana Nuncio, in her position as President of the Latino Leadership Coalition, will direct the League on how we can help with the Latino community (dual language ballots, more streamlined training for translation services, for example).
- Elizabeth Clouse will be working on identifying assisted living and nursing homes in the area and working to ensure that residents there have the informational resources they need, are able to cast absentee ballots in a timely manner, or have ways to get to the polls on election day.
- Homeless and new residents were also identified as potential groups not voting.
- Further Actions: Survey comparable cities for municipal practices—if they have Spanish language ballots and how it affected voter participation, etc. Also, survey polling places for accessibility; create a survey for ease of voting information gathering; speak with members of each of the communities above to learn what they find difficult about voting.

Election Work—the Salem Unit volunteered to participate with the state on collecting voter information. Volunteers on this initiative will be asked to:

- Research the job description
- Research issues that pertain to this specific office based upon the level of government, description of the office, and current events.
- Think about what voters will be interested in and use to make their decisions.
- Ask friends, neighbors, and family what issues are top most in their minds.
- Make sure questions can be answered within the 200 word limit, but are not yes/no questions.
- This will be broken into three groups:
  - Group 1: Federal Offices: US Senator and US Representative, State Offices: Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of the Commonwealth
  - Group 2: State Offices: Lt. Governor, Treasurer and Receiver General, Auditor, District Offices: Governor’s Councilor, District Attorney
  - Group 3: District Offices: State Senator, State Representative, Register of Deeds
- Interested individuals were asked to respond by June 7.
• We have also volunteered to participate in the year-long ballot question process study. If you are interested in participating in the study, please let Jen or Judith know.

• We are holding on state direction for next steps. The League can work with the AC:U on poll training closer to the election, so members can work as poll observers. Judith/Jen to coordinate with the ACLU. Please let them know if you are interested in attending such a training. Several of us have taken the training, and it is hugely informative.

Know Your City Brochure and Documents

• Patti Morsillo has volunteered to compile a city government information packet. Lindsay Morsillo has offered to create a stand-alone document specific to the City Council. If you would like to help with specific sections of the document, please contact Patti.

Educational Components—In addition to collecting and communicating the materials above, we need to start promoting our own presence within Salem and conducting regular voter registrations.

• Claudia Lyons is working on organizing for the 4th of July. We will be marching in the Pride Parade on June 23. Other venues: Summer Meals program, Latino Heritage month events, Black Picnic. Claudia will start pulling together a spreadsheet of local events and opportunities. This will serve as a planning document moving forward.

• Further Action: The LLC has a standing invitation to create public service announcements spots on Salem Access TV (SATV). Please send any spot announcements to us, if you are feeling creative! We can help craft notices and announcements about voting, news, informational tidbits, etc.

Other

• ACLU is offering “What a Difference a DA Makes” and Court observer training. Judith/Jen will talk to the ACLU about local presentations (or attending an ACLU training and conducting one with our own resources).

• Eventually, when we have materials, we will need to work with the Chamber of Commerce, City Hall and Main Streets to reach new residents.

• Fund-raising should be part of all we do, because creating the materials and securing booths at events will cost money.

We have a lot to do, but a lot of enthusiastic and engaged volunteers.

Please join us at our next meeting, July 24th at 6:30 at the Council on Aging. For more information, message us on Facebook, or email Judith at Judith.reilly.77@gmail.com.

Environment and Climate Change

The Environment and Climate Change Working Group is learning about existing environmental organizations within Salem, focusing on local issues and concerns. Members are exploring how we can impact local legislative initiatives and partner with city groups to advance sustainable environmental projects.

At the first meeting, the group decided to attend:

• the June 21st meeting of the Salem City Council's Public Health, Safety & Environment Committee for a presentation from the city's Sustainability, Energy and Resiliency Committee (SERC) on their completed projects and upcoming goals including the roadmap for the 100% Clean Energy Resolution

• the June 25th meeting of SERC, where we hope to discuss how our group can facilitate and inform the work of this committee
Other projects we are undertaking include

- building an electronic study guide with summary information of topics of interest and links for local and state organizations and environmental resources
- developing a community lending library with other LWV Salem working groups
- providing community education on topics of interest

Please join us in these and other efforts! For more information message us on Facebook or call/text Shelly at 978-979-5771

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Gun Safety

The Gun Safety Working Group met on June 20 to begin studying the effects of gun violence on communities, and to learn about gun laws. We are using the LWV Marblehead Study Group Guide as a jumping off point. The guide can be found [here](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/10/2/16399418/us-gun-violence-statistics-maps-charts). If you were unable to make it to the meeting, begin by looking at the Public Health section.

Members were asked to read “America’s Unique Gun Violence Problem, explained in 17 maps and Charts” on vox.com. The data in the article supports several things, mainly, states with more guns have more gun deaths; most gun deaths are suicides; programs that limit access to guns have decreased suicides; in states with more guns, more police officers are also killed on duty; specific gun control policies are fairly popular.


On July 9, we met with the LWV Marblehead Gun Safety group to begin planning a public forum, currently scheduled for Thursday November 15. The forum has a working title of “Why Are Guns a Public Health Issue?”. We are actively contacting leaders in the field of gun violence and its effect on public health.

If you would like to get involved, please join us! For more information, message us on Facebook or email Patti at prmorsillo@gmail.com.

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Did you Know?

The states with the most guns report the most suicides.

Policies that limit access to guns have decreased suicides.


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Healthcare and Reproductive Freedom

The Healthcare and Reproductive Freedom Working Group had a small meeting to get things started. They discussed the fact that we are pretty lucky here in MA with respect to access, reproductive rights and planned parenthood.

Other issues discussed were:
- Vaccinations
- Sex Education legislation
- Opioid Crises
Mental Health Services

For next steps, Norene is asking folks to respond to her with their views on these issues, what might be added or deleted, and how our unit might best respond going forward. Perhaps an email dialogue at this busy time of year is better than trying to get everyone around a table, though another meeting can happen if there is interest.

Please feel free to join in on the email discussion and get involved in this important topic. Message Norene on Facebook, or email her at norene.gachignard@gmail.com.

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Education

The Education Working Group met on June 13. The meeting started with a summary of League of Women Voters-Massachusetts positions on education issues:

- Equal access to education
- Adequate funding: in particular, adjust the Foundation budget to meet changing needs and to cover costs. This was recommended by a working group in 2015 and legislation is moving now.
- Special education that meets children’s needs to reach their full individual potential
- Limits to school choice / charters

Issues that people attending the meeting identified include:

- Local education issues are of most interest
- Civics education (this is another legislative initiative in the statehouse now with LWV support). Use an evidence-based civics education curriculum.
- Health education
- Referendum process – the state LWV is studying the referendum process, Salem stepped up to help. This is a potential area for student engagement.
- Equal access to education
- Adequate state funding
- Attend school committee meetings to stay engaged in local issues as they arise
- School Committee policy committee is discussing formation of an Equity Subcommittee. They are looking for models in Massachusetts to learn from: the structure, how it operates, the issues examined. What are their findings and how did they arrive at them?
- College tuition: Can undocumented students get in state tuition at public colleges in MA? How is NYS funding free college? Are there unintended downsides of free college like placing a lower value on the courses, disrupting planning for the college?
- School culture: What do we know about the Salem school culture from surveys of students and staff? There are multiple surveys of high school students; Panorama is surveying students in Salem. What are the findings? This could provide useful information about students moving from Bowditch to other schools.
- Student transience / level of homelessness: there are 220 homeless students in Salem Public Schools.

Next steps

- Chris and Lori to try to attend School Committee meetings and post notes
- Research on School Equity Committees: The group split up urban districts to search for any equity work going on. Equity committee, curriculum, or framework. The structure, how it operates, the issues examined. What are their findings and how did they arrive at them?
  Ana: Brookline, Concord, Newton
  Chris: Chelsea, Lynn, Lawrence
  Lori: Framingham, Worcester, Holyoke
  Shelly: Revere, Methuen, Springfield
Jen: Haverhill, Fall River, New Bedford

For more information and to get involved with the Education Working Group, message Chris on Facebook or email her at Christine.ross271@gmail.com. Join them at their next meeting on August 1 (see calendar).

Affordable Housing

The Affordable Housing Working Group met on Saturday June 16. The initial meeting was attended by approximately 30 interested Salem residents, including 2 city councilors and Mayor Driscoll. Clearly this is an issue that resonates with the community. After introductions during which everyone expressed why they were attending and what they hoped to learn, the group broke up into three subgroups to discuss concerns/issues/actions.

Discussion items:

- 6 ways in which the city can tackle the affordable housing issue:
  * Development – not enough inclusionary zoning
  * In-law apartment regulations – need work
  * Condo Conversion regulations
  * Short-term rental regulation
  * New voices are needed on Housing Authority – the board needs to be engaged and active
  * Community Land Trust

- The waiting list for public housing:
  
  3000 families
  1600 seniors

- The ability to afford housing is tied to wages and salaries. Many people working in Salem do not earn enough to live in Salem.

- Difficulty in navigating the system, e.g., rental applications are different for each building. Why?

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board has been revived to identify a menu of items for housing. The group should be connected to this board, to help advocate for their policies. Should be ready to roll out guidelines in the fall.

- Housing Choice Legislation at state level – need to follow.

Proposed Actions:

- NIMBY education
- Community education, e.g., owner occupied credits for upgrades for affordable units.
- Zoning effects on housing stock
- Check box on excise tax for affordable housing fund?
- Tools available for tackling affordable housing (see list of 6 above)
- Forum for education
- PR campaign – create a greater sense of urgency; tell real stories around affordable housing issues.
- Evidence based data
- 6 weeks left in state legislative session – Great Neighborhoods – update of zoning requirements. LWV Salem will provide a synopsis of bill for outreach efforts.
- Zoning – make it a more palatable topic for meetings.
- Showing up at city council meetings.
• Working on transitional housing, in-law, rental requirements.

The proposed actions fall into 2 main areas:

• Education!!!
  
  Forum (invite outside experts to help discuss and educate around housing stock in a healthy city). People need to understand that this effects them directly, either through their children, their elderly parents or themselves.

  PR Campaign – through use of video stories, or editorials

• Data

  The city has so much data from surveys already done regarding housing and income. Also data around residents of the downtown and car ownership. It is hard for people who live in the “suburbs” of Salem to understand younger residents’ lack of cars by choice. We need to use data when discussing this.

For more information and to get involved with the Public Housing Working Group, message Lori on Facebook or email her at loreleestewart@gmail.com.

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**From LWVMA, Automatic Voter Registration Passes!**

June 27, 2018

Success! *This afternoon, the Massachusetts House passed the Automatic Voter Registration bill 130-20.*

We applaud the Massachusetts House for taking this step. *Bringing AVR to our state will remove real obstacles to political participation, ensuring that more voices can be heard.*

AVR now goes to the Senate for action. *Please take a moment to thank your State Representative and urge your State Senator to vote for the bill when it reaches the floor.*

AVR is the next major reform in voting. It shifts voter registration from an opt-in system to an opt-out one. When eligible citizens interact with the Registry of Motor vehicles or certain other state agencies, they are automatically registered to vote unless they say no. AVR will increase voter registration, make voter rolls more accurate, and make the election system more secure.

Massachusetts is now on track to become the 14th state to adopt AVR. *At a time when there are efforts across the country to make it more difficult for citizens to register and vote, Massachusetts can be proud of taking this very positive step to help our citizens register.*

Thanks to all of you for your emails, letters, phone calls, and in-person requests to legislators to make this happen. And thanks to our strong partners in the Election Modernization Coalition who worked with us to advance this legislation.
From LWVMA, Legislative Action

July Opportunities for Action

The legislative session ends July 31; all bills that will become law must pass in the next three weeks. Please contact legislators about at least one or two of these items. To help legislators gauge constituent support, each email or phone call should be about only one bill, with the bill number, topic or name in the subject line. Send separate emails or make separate calls to support more than one bill. Thank you! You are making a difference.

Elections & Voting:

Automatic Voter Registration: The House passed automatic voter registration, now numbered H.4671, 130-20 on June 26. The bill is now in the Senate, and we expect a vote there next week. Thank your Representative and ask your Senator to support this bill.

Energy & Environment:

Energy Town Hall: The third in a series of town hall meetings with legislators on energy and climate change is scheduled for Thursday, July 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m. First Church in Jamaica Plain, 6 Eliot Street, Boston. Rep. Jeffrey Sánchez is expected to attend. The event is free but registration is required; sign up here. Rep. Sánchez is chair of the House Ways & Means Committee; come and ask for his support for climate change legislation.

Toxic Flame Retardants: We have been trying to ban toxic flame retardants in Massachusetts for years. The Senate has passed a version of the bill, S.2555. The House version, H.4656, is in the House Ways & Means Committee. This measure stalled at this point in the last session. Please contact your Representative and ask that this bill, particularly important for children and firefighters, be brought to the floor for a vote.

Gun Control:

Extreme Risk Protection Order Bill: Governor Baker signed this bill into law Tuesday, July 3, strengthening Massachusetts' already strong gun laws. This so-called "red flag" law, which establishes a civil procedure for removing guns from people who pose a significant danger of causing harm to themselves or others, passed the Senate in late May and the House June 28. Thank your legislators!

Education:

Sex Education: Join us and our partners at Planned Parenthood for a lobby day July 17 to push the House to pass the Healthy Youth bill, H.3704, to provide age-appropriate and medically-accurate sex education in schools. It's already passed the Senate. We've been working on this bill for over a decade. The Last Chance Lobby Day for the Healthy Youth Act is Tuesday, July 17, noon to 2:30 p.m. Meet in room 437 of the Massachusetts State House. RSVP here. Check out the event on Facebook here. Let your Representative know we want this bill to pass, even if you don't come to the lobby day.

Foundation Budget: The bill to update and modernize the Foundation Budget formula for state aid to school districts, S.2525, passed the Senate unanimously and is now in the House Rules Committee. Contact your Representative and ask that this important bill come to the floor for a vote. This bill will implement reforms suggested by the 2015 Foundation Budget Review Committee. A fact sheet is here.

Women's Issues:

Repeal Archaic Laws: As the possibility of federal changes in abortion law looms, it becomes more necessary than ever that Massachusetts repeal a law still on the books which bans abortion in the state and otherwise restricts women's health choices. The Senate unanimously passed S.2260 to repeal these archaic laws in January. The bill is now in the House Ways & Means Committee. Contact your Representative and ask that this bill come to the floor for a vote. Read a Boston Globe article on this bill here.
Disability Insurance: To remove the gender discrepancies in individual disability insurance policies, H.482/S.545 needs to come to the House floor for a vote. Ask your Representative to make that happen.

Water Resources:

Water Banking Fee: This bill, H.2116, allows cities and towns to collect fees from developers to mitigate the increased cost burdens of water, storm runoff and sewer that are incurred by municipalities when development occurs. It has been in the queue for a House vote for weeks. Please call your Representative and ask that this bill move up in line and be voted on. The bill can't go to the Senate until this happens.

Health Care:

License Midwives: This bill, H.4655, would require midwives practicing in out-of-hospital settings to be licensed. Among other things, this would facilitate insurance payment for such services. Time is running out to get this bill out of the Committee on Health Care Financing and up for a vote. Let your Representative and Senator know you care about this bill.

Transportation:

Bicycle Safety: A bill to make all road users, but especially bicyclists and pedestrians, safer, S.2584, passed the Senate unanimously and is awaiting a House vote. Contact your Representative in support of this bill, An Act to reduce traffic fatalities.

Immigration:

Protections for Immigrants: The state budget is still in conference committee, so it is not too late to contact your own Representative, Speaker DeLeo (617-722-2500), House Ways & Means Chairman Sánchez (617-722-2990), and Governor Baker (617-725-4005). See the June 12 Action Alert for scripts.

Climate Change:

The state legislature has the opportunity to act on climate change bills, but it must do so in the next 3 weeks. While we'd prefer the House pass Senate bill S.2564, the House is expected to take up several of its own energy bills this week. It now appears the best chance for climate change legislation this session is for the House to pass the bills listed below, which echo provisions supported by LWVMA and are included in the Senate bill:

- H.4575-renewable portfolio standard
- H.4576-energy storage
- H.4577-net metering

Additionally, ask that the House pass legislation that will put a price on carbon emissions, as described in H.1726, or as a market-based pricing mechanism, as described in S.2564. We need to reduce emissions, and carbon pricing is considered the most effective approach available by a broad cross-section of experts.

Please call your Representative, Speaker DeLeo, and House Ways and Means Chair Jeffrey Sánchez by this Wednesday, July 11, and ask them to act favorably on these bills. There is no time nor good reason to delay strong action to address climate change. Our health, economy and a livable planet for future generations depend on it.

Sample script: "I'm a member of the ______ League of Women Voters and I'm calling to ask Rep. _____________ to help pass strong climate change legislation in this session. I urge him/her to support the following House bills that will advance a clean energy economy and future: H.4575 increasing the renewable portfolio standard; H.4576 supporting energy storage development; and H.4577 addressing changes in net metering policy. It is also important to support carbon pricing legislation, either H.1726 or S.2564. Time is running out to act on climate change; we must take action now. Thank you."
Progress Update: Action on LWVMA bills since mid-June

Signed into law by the Governor:

**H.4670** Extreme Risk Protection Order bill to remove guns from people who pose a significant danger to themselves or others.

Bills that have passed one chamber and are awaiting a vote in the other:

**H.4671** To implement automatic voter registration in the state. Passed House, in Senate.

**S.2584** To improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety. Passed Senate, in House.

Bills reported favorably from committee and awaiting a vote in the first chamber:

**H.482/S.545** To require gender equality in privately-purchased disability insurance policies.

**H.4656** To ban certain toxic flame retardants in Massachusetts.

**H.4655** To license midwives practicing in out-of-hospital settings.

See the end of the newsletter for information on how to contact your elected representatives.

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We are looking for donations of books of stamps!

When we do Voter Registration, we need to mail the forms for voters outside of Salem to the appropriate town or city halls. If you can donate a book of stamps, we would appreciate your help.

Please contact Judith Reilly (judith.reilly.77@gmail.com) for information.
June 27, 2018

**Undercount of Massachusetts Children Could Affect Federally Funded Supports**

*2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book shows how a 2020 census undercount could harm childhood health, education, economic well-being, and family stability.*

As the nation heads toward the 2020 census, new estimates show that 104,000 (29 percent) of the state's youngest children live in neighborhoods where the census has historically had difficulty achieving an accurate count.

Counting all people in the state accurately plays an important role in determining federal funding for communities. While Massachusetts is ranked second in the nation on child well-being, according to the *2018 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, an undercount of Massachusetts children could adversely impact the programs and supports that have aided the state's progress and allowed children to thrive. MassBudget is the KIDS COUNT® organization for Massachusetts.

An undercount could affect the services that help the families make ends meet. In Fiscal Year 2015, the federal government supported Massachusetts children in a variety of ways, such as through $280.9 million for special education services, $146.9 million for the Head Start program, and $76.3 million for affordable child care.

The annual *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four domains - health, education, economic well-being, and family and community - as an assessment of child well-being. Massachusetts ranks second overall. According to the *Data Book*, Massachusetts leads the nation in health measures, reading levels and mathematic achievement, but the share of children living in poverty is the same as it was in 2010 - 14 percent. Within each domain, Massachusetts ranks:

- **11th in economic well-being.** The share of Massachusetts children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment decreased by 10 percent since 2010.
- **Second in education.** Massachusetts children remain first in mathematic achievement (with 50 percent of eighth-graders scoring at or above proficient level) and reading level (with 51 percent of fourth-graders scoring at or above proficient level). The number of 3- and 4-year olds attending school has stayed essentially the same since 2009-2011.
- **First in health.** The state remains first in the nation in ensuring children have health insurance and has seen a slight decrease since 2010 in the percent of babies born with a low birthweight.
- **Ninth in family and community domain.** The state has seen a 47 percent drop in teen birth rates since 2010, and has seen a slight decrease in the number of children living in
LWVMA and Coalition Partners Urge Massachusetts Senate to Pass Clean AVR Bill

July 9, 2018/Boston, MA

The League of Women of Massachusetts and its partners in the Election Modernization Coalition sent a letter today to members of the Massachusetts Senate urging them to vote in favor of H.4671, Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), when it comes to the Senate floor, hopefully later this week.

The letter requested that the Senate pass a clean bill, stating in pertinent part: “In the interest of getting the bill through the entire legislative process this late in the session, we also ask that you refrain from amending the AVR bill that came over from the House. While we too support other election law reforms, adding amendments this late in the session could imperil AVR….AVR will make vital upgrades to our registration system, keeping our voter rolls more up-to-date, enhancing the security of our electoral process, and encouraging new voters to get involved. However, in order for this measure to be in place for the next Presidential election in 2020, it must be enacted this session—next year would be too late.”

The letter is available [here](#).

Do you have an hour or two to volunteer this summer?

We are looking for volunteers for Voter Registration

- Farmers Market evenings (Thursdays 3-7)
- Salem Jazz Fest (August 18-19)

If you can volunteer for an hour or two, or you would like more information, please contact Judith Reilly (Judith.reilly.77@gmail.com)
**From LWVUS, Press Release:**

6/20/2018

**PUBLIC PRESSURES PRESIDENT TO END FAMILY SEPARATIONS**

Washington, DC - The League of Women Voters president Chris Carson issued a statement following President Trump’s Executive Order.

“At first glance, it appears that the President is working to end the current practice of separating families at our borders. The League looks forward to continuing to review the entire executive order to assess the full impact. We are hopeful that this is a step in the right direction toward protecting and reuniting families at our borders.

*Make no mistake, this crisis is long from being solved. There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done to reunite these families and ensure their health and safety.*

*“This week the U.S. House is scheduled to vote on two pieces of legislation that address Dreamers and border security.*

*“The League is opposed to these highly partisan pieces of legislation and we believe they are bad for America. Immigration policies should promote reunification of families and we encourage Congress to pass the bipartisan Dream Act.”*

The League sent a memo to all House members highlighting the inability of the legislation’s provisions to advance our country’s immigration system, protect dreamers and preserve families. Last week, the League of Women Voters activated our Lobby Corps and grassroots supporters around this issue and we will continue to stay engaged to influence the outcome of the pending legislation. We are grateful for the tireless work of so many activists and advocacy groups on this issue around the country who we will continue to support in this effort.

6/25/2018

**NC COURT SENDS GERRYMANDERING CASE BACK TO LOWER COURT, FURTHER DELAYING VOTER PROTECTIONS**

Washington, DC and Raleigh, NC – Today the Supreme Court sent Rucho v. League of Women Voters of NC — a case challenging North Carolina’s remedial congressional map—back to the U.S District court for further consideration in light of the recent Gill v. Whitford decision. In Gill, the court sent the case back to the lower court requiring plaintiffs to show concrete and particularized harm.

*“The Supreme Court decision is yet another delay in providing voters clarity around their fundamental right and is particularly disappointing with the upcoming election cycle,” said Chris Carson, president of the League of Women Voters of the United States. “Partisan gerrymandering continues to distort and undermine our representative democracy, the Court’s ongoing hesitation to tackle this important issue is disheartening.”*

The League of Women Voters of North Carolina was a plaintiff in Rucho v. League of Women Voters of NC which was combined with Common Cause v. Rucho. The League filed the original challenge in September 2016 and in an emergency brief in this case urged the court to hold off on deciding this case until resolution of Gill v. Whitford.
"The League of Women Voters of North Carolina will continue to fight for voters all across the state to ensure their voices can be heard," said Janet Hoy, co-president of the League of Women Voters of North Carolina. "We are confident that we can satisfy the questions about standing and ultimately have this case heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in time for fair districts to be in place for the 2020 election."

“Partisan gerrymandering is a problem, it is wrong, and the League of Women Voters will continue to fight for equal representation through fair maps that furthers democracy by empowering voters,” said Carson.

6/26/2018
SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS DISCRIMINATING TRAVEL BAN

Washington, DC – Today the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the Trump Administration's travel ban is within the president’s authority. The League of Women Voters president, Chris Carson, issued the following statement in response to today's ruling:

“The Court got this one wrong. President Trump’s travel ban targets Muslim nations and is a violation of religious freedom. We are a country of immigrants and must treat those wishing to come to this country with dignity and in accordance to the protections of our Constitution. This travel ban is not only wrong and bad for our country, it is simply un-American.

“The League of Women Voters is opposed to discrimination, including discrimination in immigration, based on religion. We believe immigration policy in this country should be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises and that all persons should receive fair treatment under the law.”

6/27/2018
HIGHLY PARTISAN IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION GOES DOWN IN FLAMES

WASHINGTON, DC—The House of Representatives today in a 121-301 vote rejected the Ryan Compromise immigration legislation. The League of Women Voters president Chris Carson issued the following statement:

“Today our Representatives saw the Ryan Compromise immigration legislation exactly for what it was, a highly partisan bill that does not address the real problems. The American people want to see action on immigration but the proposed legislation in the House was not a compromise. It was more of the same bad policies we’ve seen before.

“The House bill was nothing more than a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Congress should be focusing on passing comprehensive immigration reform that includes reuniting families—rather than asking Dreamers to swallow a range of draconian provisions that would harm fellow Dreamers, their parents, and the immigrant community as a whole.

“The time for Congress to pass the bipartisan Dream Act is long overdue.”
GLAMOUR: VIRGINIA KASE'S MIDTERM PLAN: MAKE IT EASIER FOR WOMEN TO VOTE

This story was originally published in Glamour.

BY CELESTE KATZ

Nearly 26 years after Virginia Kase voted in her first election, her voice still rings with the hurt and frustration she felt that day. “I [was] excited. It [was] this great rite of passage [and] I go to the table to register, and I look over and my mom's having a problem.”

While it was the first time Kase, now 46, had ever set foot in a polling station, her foster mother—originally from Puerto Rico—was a regular voter. Still, Kase said, “Her English wasn't perfect. Sometimes people didn't understand her. So I went over to make sure she was okay and able to communicate… They were asking her for proof of residence. And I was horrified.”

Now, in her first interview as the incoming CEO of the League of Women Voters, Kase told Glamour that the memory of feeling powerless to intervene on behalf of her own mother brings a deeply personal dimension to her new mission: Helping as many Americans as possible exercise their right to vote.

“I never want anybody to have to go through what my mom went through,” Kase said during a phone conversation."She was able to vote that day. She went home, she got a utility bill, she came back, she slammed it on the table, and she made sure that her vote counted... But there are a lot of women who don't have that same comfort with going back and doing what they need to do.”

Kase comes to the League with a track record of work with organizations focused on immigrant and civil rights. Until mid-July, she’s COO of CASA and CASA in Action, where her responsibilities range from political strategy to collective bargaining. (Her tenure at the League begins July 25.) No stranger to politics, her background also includes years spent with organizations that addressed youth gang violence and fostered career training in her hometown of Hartford, Connecticut.

She joins the nonpartisan League—founded in 1920, the same year American women won the right to vote—in the sprint to November’s crucial midterm elections.

“I think that women are going to do tremendous things this year. It's a unique time in our history,” Kase said.

The League claims more than 300,000 members and supporters spanning all 50 states. It promotes voter registration and education, opposes policies it identifies as voter suppression, and supports reforming campaign finance and gun laws.

“One of the things [that] drew me to the League— in addition to [the] historic significance of this amazing organization that is nearly 100 years old—is this renewed focus on diversity, equity and inclusion,” she said. “Lifting up women of color [and] also bringing more young women into the fold [are] two things that for me are extremely important.”

A wealth of research suggests requiring photo ID or even proof of citizenship can have an outsized impact on minority, young, and low-income voters. The strictest proposals, championed in the name of election integrity, have run into trouble in the courts; President Donald Trump’s own claims of widespread voter fraud remain unproven.

“It's extraordinarily important that we make voting as easy as possible. We don't want to create barriers,”
Kase said. “It's unjust, and something that the League will continue to fight against to ensure that everybody is able to exercise their Constitutional right to vote.”

Kase, now herself a mother of two, says her first vote back in 1992 was the moment when she “realized that my perfect English, the way that I look, was different from my mom. [It] really showed me the privilege that existed within me, and that I needed to do something about it.”

The University of Maryland graduate will bring that memory to the new job—along with the backstory of coming up in Hartford at a time when youth violence was so bad that a National Guard-run program for high school dropouts was shut down after being overrun by gangs. “I grew up in a community where people went to jail,” says Kase. That experience shaped her interest in another goal: Restoring voting rights to people who have lost them after a felony conviction.

But, with all the work of engaging women voters and helping them exercise their right ahead of her, does Kase believe American politics can really be changed by the so-called “pink wave?”

“I hope so. I think the wave has been coming for a long time. Even since before Donald Trump, women are educating themselves [more] on the issues, and you have organizations like the League [that] are focused on making sure that people have the right information,” she said. “I do hope that people turn out in record numbers this year, [just] as we [are seeing] more women run for office this year than in years before... Certainly, we're gonna work our butts off to make that happen.”

League Membership! Join Us! *Shelly Stuler, Membership Chair*

Please send payment of $50 and an optional contribution with the following dues statement:

LWV SALEM DUES STATEMENT

Name ____________________________________________

Address __________________________________________

Phone ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________

Dues $______________ Optional Contribution $ ________________

League activities I am interested in __________________________________________

Dues are $50.00, which include emails from LWVMA (State League) and LWVUS (National League) as Bulletins, Studies, Legislative Action Alerts, Notices of Informational Sessions and Conferences.

*Please make your check payable to: LWVMA*

Send check with this dues statement to: Shelly Stuler, 40 Summer St., Salem, MA 01970
## Contact Information for Action

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## How to Access League of Women Voters Positions

The League takes action at the National, State and Local level based on League positions. We do not support candidates or parties. Actions in the Massachusetts League Action Newsletter are based on established positions.


National League Positions: [http://lwv.org/content/impact-issues](http://lwv.org/content/impact-issues).