



LWVMA Stands on Ballot Questions

Three ballot questions will be on the statewide ballot November 6. The LWVMA board has determined that LWVMA will support a yes vote on two of them, and local Leagues can advocate for those two. Below are the three questions, in the order they will appear on the ballot, and our stands.

Question 1: To pass a law relative to patient safety.

LWVMA takes no stand on this ballot question.

This proposed law would limit how many patients could be assigned to each registered nurse in Massachusetts hospitals and certain other health care facilities. The maximum number of patients per registered nurse would vary by type of unit and level of care, spelled out in detail in the question. The proposed law would require a covered facility to comply with the patient assignment limits without reducing its level of nursing, service, maintenance, clerical, professional, and other staff.

The League's stated goal for health care is: "An affordable health care system that provides equal access to quality health care for all." One side on this ballot question argues this measure provides for quality health care; the other side argues this measure would damage the health care system financially and make care unaffordable. LWVMA's position could be interpreted to support both sides, and so LWVMA is not taking a stand on this question.

Question 2: To establish a citizens commission concerning a Constitutional amendment to secure government of the people.

LWVMA supports this question and urges a YES vote.

This proposed law would create a citizens commission to consider and recommend potential amendments to the United States Constitution to establish that corporations do not have the same Constitutional rights as human beings and that campaign contributions and expenditures may be regulated. Any resident of Massachusetts who is a United States citizen would be able to apply for appointment to the 15-member commission, and members would serve without compensation. The commission's first report would be due December 31, 2019.

The national League position states that the League could support a Constitutional amendment if it meets certain criteria. Therefore, studying the impact of a Constitutional amendment, as this ballot question recommends, would be consistent with supporting an amendment only

after careful consideration. Supporting this question does not commit the League to supporting any recommended amendment.

Question 3: To retain the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

LWVMA supports and urges a YES vote on this question.

This ballot question is a referendum to repeal an existing law. It asks voters whether a law passed in 2016 that includes gender identity in the list of characteristics for which discrimination in places of public accommodation, resort, or amusement is prohibited by state law should be kept. This law protects the rights of transgender individuals. A yes vote is to keep the current law in place. A no vote is to repeal the law. The exact wording of the question is: "Do you approve of a law summarized below, which was approved by the House of Representatives by a vote of 117-36 on July 7, 2016, and approved by the Senate by a voice vote on July 7, 2016?"

The League supports equal rights for all. Our goal is to secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all and to promote social and economic justice, and the health and safety of all Americans. LWVMA has joined the "[Freedom for All Massachusetts](#)" Coalition in support of a yes vote for this question.

Detailed information on each of the ballot questions is available on the Secretary of State's website: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/>