Annual Report 2016-2017

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

Dear Friends,

We are proud to share with you the 2016-17 Annual Report of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and the League of Women Voters Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund.

This report captures the Massachusetts League's incredible range of voter service, advocacy, and educational activities between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017. But, more importantly, *it captures our substantial impact throughout the state.*

Over its 97 years, LWVMA has been at the forefront of change throughout the state, and last year was no exception. Through the combined efforts of League members in 46 local chapters, LWVMA led the way through its numerous initiatives to educate and engage voters…through its legislative and grassroots activism…and through its programs designed to ensure that residents of Massachusetts are knowledgeable about issues of public importance.

We are grateful for and humbled by the work of our Board of Directors and Trustees and by the tireless activity of local Leagues from Cape Cod to Williamstown. The League is powered by its members, and none of our vital work would get done without many individuals pulling together in the same direction.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are feeling energized by the substantial influx of new members into our ranks and by the creation of four new local chapters. Thank you to everyone who made our successes possible!

In League,

Mary Ann Ashton
President

Meryl Kessler
Executive Director

Mary Ann Ashton

Meryl Kessler

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Elections and Voting

During the deeply polarizing 2016 election season, LWVMA's **MOVE 2016 initiative** empowered Massachusetts citizens to cut through the divisive rhetoric and misleading clutter by providing unbiased, easy-to-use election information and engaging voters on the issues that matter most.

Our **MOVE 2016** voter education and engagement initiative:

- Provided **33,028** voters with in-depth, nonpartisan information about candidates and issues through our VOTE411 online voters' guide;
- Engaged over **400** students statewide in the electoral process through our *YOUth Should Vote* high school video contest;
- Encouraged **201** municipalities to offer substantial early voting options beyond the floor set by law through the Early Voting Challenge;
- Educated citizens about online and teen voter registration by distributing over **15,000** informational postcards;
- Ensured that elections in our state would be fair, free, and accessible by providing Election Protection poll watchers and hotline volunteers on election day; and
- Expanded civic education through our League Choice Books program.

Educational Programs

In February 2017, LWVMA sponsored public forum on "Assessing Our Security in an Age of Mayhem" with **Juliette Kayyem, CNN commentator and former Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security**, at Bentley University.

Juliette Kayyem speaks to a full house at Bentley University.

In April 2017, at its Convention, LWVMA hosted keynote speaker **Brian McGrory, Editor, *The Boston Globe***, who noted that the *Globe* and the League have a lot in common: **"Our goal is to foster engagement. You have done that for your entire history. You were activists before people realized how utterly vital it is to be engaged. We bow down to you."**

***Globe* Editor Brian McGrory and incoming LWVMA President Mary Ann Ashton at Convention.**

Other Convention speakers included **Rachael Cobb, Professor of Government, Suffolk University** on the electoral system, and a panel of newly-elected legislators who discussed their roles as **Millennial Voices in the Massachusetts State Legislature.**

In May 2017, LWVMA launched its "2017 LWVMA Climate and Energy Solutions Series" with the first of five regional forums, "On the Path to 100% Renewable Energy," in Worcester. Speakers included **David Ismay, Conservation Law Foundation; Eugenia Gibbons, Mass Energy Consumers Alliance; and Maria Marcum, Climate Disobedience Center**.

Advocacy and Activism

By the end of the 189th session of the Massachusetts legislature in December 2016, LWVMA's Legislative Action Committee had followed and submitted testimony on 53 bills. Even more important, LWVMA's advocacy at the State House helped ensure passage of laws that **improve access to public records, close the pay equity gap, and increase the state's reliance on renewable energy sources**.

As the next two-year session of the legislature began in January 2017, our legislative priorities included **automatic voter registration, comprehensive criminal justice reform, and legislation to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and through a transition to clean, renewable energy**.

And our advocacy and activism was not constrained by the walls of the State House. **With thousands of other women and men, we took to the streets in Boston and Washington, DC on January 21, 2017 to stand up for women's rights and democracy as part of the historic Women's Marches**.

Supporting Our Local Leagues

In Massachusetts, our grassroots are our 46 local Leagues, and we are proud that this year we added chapters in Central Berkshire County, Framingham, Franklin County, and Greater Lowell. Together, all of our local chapters serve over 200 communities and, through their citizen education and voter service activities, make democracy work every day.

To support their efforts, our **Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grant Program** provides funding for local Leagues to carry out programs that increase citizen participation in the democratic process, study key community issues in an unbiased manner, and enable people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

In FY 2016-17, the Daniel Scharfman Citizen Education Grant Program was proud to provide funding to the following local Leagues: Arlington, Concord-Carlisle, Greater Haverhill, Hamilton-Wenham, Harvard, Melrose, Northampton, Plymouth, Sudbury, Wayland, Westford, Weston, and Worcester.

The Bottom Line: Our Year in Numbers

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS
AND LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS LOTTE E. SCHARFMAN MEMORIAL FUND
COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2017

SUPPORT, REVENUES, RECLASSIFICATIONS:	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL ACTIVITIES
Gifts, Grants and Contributions	$106,664	$10,244	--	$116,908
Membership Dues and Assessments	60,883	--	--	60,883
Program Fees	19,246	--	--	19,246
Change in Value of Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trust	--	--	51,373	51,373
Investment Return	31,000	9,785	--	40,785
Other Income	468	--	--	468
Net Assets Released from Restriction	12,034	(12,034)	--	--
TOTAL SUPPORT, REVENUES AND RECLASSIFICATIONS	230,295	7,995	51,373	289,663
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES:	--	--	--	--
Program Services	132,507	--	--	132,507
Administrative	75,814	--	--	75,814
Fund Raising	27,952	--	--	27,952
TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES	236,273	--	--	236,273
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(5,978)	7,995	51,373	53,390
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	322,177	17,799	918,087	1,258,063
NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR	316,199	25,794	969,460	1,311,453

We are grateful for the generosity of our many supporters and our volunteers. We wish to particularly acknowledge the Nathalie and Theodore Jones Trust, the Donald and Nehamah Quimby Charitable Foundation, the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, and the Salem Five Charitable Foundation. We also appreciate the *pro bono* legal support we have received from Goulston & Storrs.

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