LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MASSACHUSETTS

2020/2021 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

We are proud to share with you the 2020-2021 Annual Report for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) and the League of Women Voters Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund, highlighting our advocacy and educational work and the impact this effort had in our communities and across Massachusetts between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

LWVMA worked to ensure all voters' voices were heard through fair and safe elections, advocated for policies to benefit all Massachusetts residents, and built relationships with diverse communities to strengthen everyone's voice in government. The League provided voter services to communities throughout the Commonwealth, educating voters on how to vote and who and what was on the 2020 ballot. Candidate forums conducted in partnership with diverse civic organizations allowed voters to hear from candidates in Congressional and State House races. We developed and maintained VOTE411.org, a one-stop shop for valuable voting information – more than 230,000 people used this online voters' guide.

The 2020 Census led to maps that will shape our state and federal government for the next ten years. LWVMA worked with the MassCounts coalition to "get out the count," encouraging all households to complete the Census form.

LWVMA and its members advocated for election reforms including election day registration and, after the 2020 election, making permanent the election reforms first implemented during the pandemic to make access to the ballot box safe. Those reforms greatly increased voter turnout. We also studied, discussed, and acted on ways to address systemic racism in the Commonwealth. Partnering with the Black and Latino Caucus and others, the League helped pass meaningful police reforms in December 2020, the first step in addressing systemic racism in policing.

LWVMA's Legislative Action Committee had a very successful year. This group of 24 volunteers successfully advocated for the passage of the ROE Act which codifies into Massachusetts law the right to reproductive health care and abortion. Our advocacy work also led to the passage of the Next Generation Climate Roadmap, despite the Governor's veto. We also scored legislative wins in supporting children in poverty, banning harmful flame retardants, funding a trust for civics projects in schools and many more areas.

In 2020-21, LWVMA continued to build partnerships with civic organizations that represent communities where the League does not have a presence. These collaborations are key to supporting voter education and outreach in underrepresented communities and to ensure our advocacy work helps address long-standing inequities in state government policies. The League is more effective working with others.

We capped the year with the 2021 Convention-Expanding the Table: Making Democracy Work for Everyone. This theme perfectly captured what the League sought to deliver over this past year and our guiding light for the future. Democracy will be strengthened by diversifying and expanding participation in government to all in our towns, cities, Commonwealth, and country. LWVMA is and will continue to be a key player in this effort because of our thoughtful positions, non-partisan approach, 47 local Leagues, and over 3,000 member volunteers. We are proud of what the League has achieved and thankful to all who made it happen.

In League,

Judy Zaunbrecher and Elizabeth Foster-Nolan
Co-Presidents

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ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM

Improved election laws are always a League priority, and at the beginning of calendar year 2020, we were advocating for a law permitting **election day registration.** The Covid-19 pandemic shifted our focus to **pandemic election reforms** to make voting safer and more accessible. We supported, and the legislature passed in early July 2020, a bill that greatly expanded access to mail voting in the state, expanded in-person early voting hours, and eased the way for election officials to process mailed ballots early and recruit election workers from a broader pool of citizens. We think this law, making it easier and safer for people to vote, contributed to record voter turnouts in both the state primary and the Nov. 3 presidential elections.

We advocated to pass the ROE Act which codifies and extends **access to abortion rights** in the state. This win was particularly important given increased concern that the U.S. Supreme Court might overturn Roe v. Wade and therefore take away federal protection for abortion access.

Over the Governor's veto, we helped to pass the Next Generation Climate Roadmap bill which **overhauls the state's climate laws**, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, advances the clean energy industry, and prioritizes and protects environmental justice communities.

The national awakening to the **systemic racism** in our country triggered by the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police led to a demand for **police reforms and accountability** in Massachusetts. The League partnered with the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus and others to pass meaningful police reforms as a start to addressing systemic racism. We are pleased that a first-step bill in making serious policing reforms passed in December 2020.

Other bills that LWVMA successfully advocated for:

- **Simplify zoning laws** by allowing changes with a simple majority rather than a two-thirds majority vote, **making it easier to build housing**, especially the multifamily housing most needed; provide **$626 million in bonding to support all types of new housing**; and provide **$500,000 for menstrual products in shelters**. These provisions from several bills we supported were included in the economic development bill.
- Create a commission to study ways to **reduce racial inequities in maternal health** and make recommendations for policies.
- **Lift the "cap on kids"** restricted benefits to families on assistance if another child was born.
- Place a **moratorium on evictions and foreclosures** during pandemic emergency.
- Require **notification of sewage pollution** in public waters.
- **Address sexual violence** on higher education campuses.
- **Ban the sale of harmful flame retardants** in the state.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

VOTE411.org: Developed and maintained content for Massachusetts candidates and pandemic-related voting laws changes for our online voting guide, **VOTE411.org**, creating a "one-stop-shop" for Massachusetts voters. The Massachusetts information on VOTE411.org was ultimately used by over **230,000** people during the Fall 2020 election season.

Key collaborator with the Massachusetts Voter Table in **phone and text banking** efforts to register low-propensity voters and to turn them out to vote during the 2020 election cycle. In total, the coalition made nearly **581,000** phone calls to make sure that all communities were counted in the 2020 U.S. Census and voted in the historic 2020 election. League volunteers made **11,000** of those calls.

LWVMA co-sponsored a series of **candidate forums** with our partner MassVOTE in August, 2020:

- 4th Congressional District candidates, moderated by Karen Holmes-Ward, WCVB's Director of Public Affairs and Community Services, Host and Executive Producer of *CityLine.*
- 2nd Suffolk State Representative candidates, moderated by Tanisha M. Sullivan, President, Boston Branch of the NAACP.
- 12th Suffolk State Representative candidates, moderated by Malia Lazu, EVP Chief Experience and Culture Officer, Berkshire Bank.
- 17th Suffolk State Representative candidates, moderated by Rachael V. Cobb, Chair and Associate Professor of the Department of Political Science & Legal Studies, Suffolk University.
- With our partner the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus Education Fund, LWVMA co-sponsored a forum for 6th Congressional District candidates, moderated by Tiziana Dearing, Host, Radio Boston, WBUR.

DEMOCRACY EDUCATION

Representative Liz Miranda at LWVMA's 2021 virtual Convention, *Expanding the Table: Making Democracy Work for Everyone.*

- After a year of unprecedented rancor and divisiveness throughout the nation, including an assault on the U.S. Capitol building and a racial justice awakening across the country, we launched our **annual student video contest**, "The Democracy Challenge." High school students were asked: *What did you learn about our democracy in 2020?* We had a record number of 125 video submissions with students reacting creatively to topics including racial justice and the right to protest; the process for conducting a presidential election and gerrymandering and voting rights. Click here to view the winning videos.

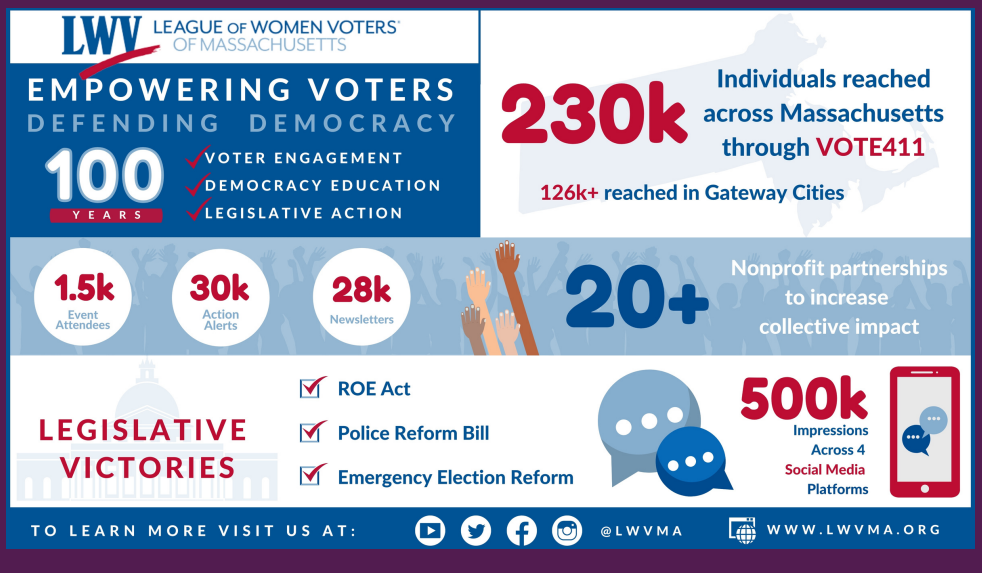
- The theme of **Convention, 2021** - *Expanding the Table: Making Democracy Work for Everyone* – came alive through the deeply inspirational keynote remarks by **Representative Liz Miranda.** Liz represents the 5th Suffolk District, the most diverse district in the Commonwealth. She moved the audience with her "heart, hope and hustle," and LWVMA will continue to support the legislative priorities we share, including police reform, immigrant rights, environmental justice, criminal justice reform, Black maternal health and mental health. If you have not heard her remarks, click here for the recording. You will be glad you did.

SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL LEAGUES

LOCAL LEAGUES

Acton Area
Amherst
Andover/North Andover
Arlington
Bedford
Belmont
Boston
Brookline
Cape Ann
Cape Cod Area
Central Berkshire County
Chelmsford
Concord-Carlisle
Falmouth
Framingham
Franklin County
Grafton/Shrewsbury
Greater Haverhill
Greater Lowell Area
Hamilton-Wenham
Harvard
Hingham
Lexington
Marblehead
Martha's Vineyard
Melrose
Natick
Needham
Newton
Northampton Area
Norwood
Plymouth Area
Salem
Sharon/Stoughton
South Coast
Sudbury
Topsfield/Boxford/Middleton
Waltham
Watertown
Wayland
Wellesley
Westford
Weston
Westwood/Walpole/Dedham
Williamstown
Winchester
Worcester Area

In Massachusetts, our **47 local Leagues and units** form our grassroots network. Through their public education and voter engagement efforts, these Leagues make democracy work every day. To support their collective efforts, LWVMA provides training, technology and administrative support as well as funding through our Lotte E. Scharfman Citizen Education Grant program. Even as the pandemic persisted, local Leagues found a way to devise programs to increase 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 engagement. LWVMA distributed $2,900 in grants to support these efforts.



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, 2021

SUPPORT, REVENUES, RECLASSIFICATIONS:	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	TOTAL ACTIVITIES
Gifts, Grants and Contributions	$304,334	$8,568	$312,902
Membership Dues and Assessments	57,699	--	57,699
Program Fees	609	--	609
Change in Value of Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trust	--	254,371	254,371
Investment Return	35,000	29,280	64,280
Other Income	882	--	882
Net Assets Released from Restriction	11,290	(11,290)	--
TOTAL SUPPORT, REVENUES AND RECLASSIFICATIONS	409,814	280,929	690,743
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES:	--	--	--
Program Services	233,822	--	233,822
Administrative	85,743	--	85,743
Fund Raising	67,077	--	67,077
TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES	386,642	--	386,642
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	23,172	280,929	304,101
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	400,524	1,067,844	1,468,368
NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR	423,696	1,348,773	1,772,469

We are grateful for the generosity of our many supporters and our volunteers.

We wish to particularly acknowledge Nancy and Reinier Beeuwkes, the Nathalie and Theodore Jones Trust, the Donald and Nehamah Quimby Charitable Foundation and Goulston & Storrs PC.

90 Canal Street, Suite 414, Boston, Massachusetts 02114
857.452.1715 www.lwvma.org lwvma@lwvma.org

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