



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Revenue
In Support of H.2933, An Act to increase community preservation revenue
By Lucy Kennedy, LWVMA Affordable Housing Specialist
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports H.2933, An Act to increase community preservation revenue. This bill amends the statute governing surcharges and fees of the Registers of Deeds, the revenue that funds the state match for local revenue dedicated to Community Preservation. These funds are allocated by local cities and towns to affordable housing, open space, recreation, and historic preservation according to local needs. In recent years, as more communities have joined the program, there has been a large drop in the funds that go to each town or city. Under H.2933, the surcharge over the fee to the Register of Deeds or Assistant Recorder would be \$80 for each document and \$40 for each municipal lien. There are some exemptions including mortgages of public agencies.

There is a great need for additional affordable housing across the Commonwealth and most communities have long waiting lists of eligible families and individuals. Additional revenue dedicated toward affordable housing would allow local communities to acquire or build units at a faster rate. The other purposes for Community Preservation funds (open space, recreation and historic preservation) are also supported by the League as designated by local communities. The additional fees seem to be a reasonable source for the Community Preservation purposes.

The League of Women Voters supports affordable housing in order to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family. State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate, and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector. Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs. When families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.

The Massachusetts League is made up of 44 local Leagues across the Commonwealth, from Cape Cod to the Berkshires. We urge the Joint Committee on Revenue to consider increasing much needed Community Preservation revenue for all the member communities by reporting out favorably H.2933. Please also follow its course to successful enactment during this 193rd session.