



DAY ON THE HILL

***Act for the Future:
Voting, Maternal Health,
Firearms, PFAS***

October 11, 2023
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Massachusetts State House
Gardner Auditorium

A Message from Our Presidents

Dear League Members,

Welcome and thank you for attending Day on the Hill. Your presence at our lobby day underscores that democracy is not a spectator sport. As we approach the mid-point in Massachusetts' two-year legislative cycle, this is the perfect time to check in with your legislators and let them know your priorities. Nothing makes a stronger impact on legislators than direct contact from constituents.

We are absolutely thrilled to have as our keynote speaker today one of the most powerful people in the legislature—**Senate President Karen Spilka**.

Today we are focusing our advocacy in four key areas: Voting, Maternal Health, Firearms, and PFAS (forever chemicals). Our legislative specialists will outline the reasons we are working so hard in these four key areas. We hope you will share these reasons with your senators and representatives.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jen Muroff, the Chair of our Legislative Action Committee, and the LWVMA Legislative Specialists who make up our Legislative Action Committee. Their hard work over the two-year legislative session makes the League's voice effective on Beacon Hill. They identify key legislation, track it over the entire session, testify at hearings, issue calls for action when action is important, and participate in coalitions. Their work is essential. The League salutes them.

When you receive our evaluation survey after the event, please return it to us promptly; your opinion is important to us.

Whether you're attending Day on the Hill in person or virtually, please know that you embody the spirit of informed citizen activism that powers our democracy.

All the best,



Elizabeth Foster-Nolan and Marie Gauthier
LWVMA Co-Presidents



Keynote Speaker Senate President Karen Spilka

Senator Karen Spilka represents the 2nd Middlesex and Norfolk district—Ashland, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medway and Natick. Before becoming Senate president, she was Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means and has been Senate Majority Whip, Assistant Majority Whip, Chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, and Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, a committee she helped originate. She began her legislative career as Representative for the Seventh Middlesex district in 2001. Spilka is a graduate of Northeastern Law School and holds a B.S. in social work from Cornell University. She is married and has three adult children.

Schedule

9:30-10:00

Check in

10:00-10:15

Welcome—Elizabeth Foster-Nolan and Marie Gauthier,
LWVMA Co-Presidents

Opening Remarks—Patricia Comfort, LWVMA Executive Director

Introductions—Jen Muroff, Legislative Action Committee Chair

10:15 -10:35

Keynote Address: Senate President Karen Spilka

10:35-10:55

Priority Legislation Panel

- Elections and Voting: Nancy Brumback and Nell Forgas
- Maternal Health: Senator Liz Miranda
- Firearms: Art Desloges
- PFAS (forever chemicals): Carolyn Lee

11:00-11:05

Lobbying Tips—Jen Muroff, Legislative Action Committee Chair

11:15-11:45

Meet with your senator

12:00-12:30

Meet with your representative

Tomorrow

Fill out and return an evaluation that will be emailed to you.

LWVMA Priority Legislation 2023-2024

Elections and Voting

S.410, An Act making voting administrative changes to create equitable systemic solutions (ACCESS Act)

Sponsor: Senator Cindy Creem

The Senate bill contains four sections. In the House, each section of the Senate bill was filed as a separate bill. Combined, the House bills listed below make up the Senate bill.

H.688, An Act establishing same day registration of voters

Sponsor: Rep. Carmine Gentile

Allows eligible individuals to register as voters at Election Day polling places and early voting sites and then vote, if they complete and sign an affidavit of registration and present the specified identification.

H.707, An Act decoupling the municipal census from voter registration

Sponsor: Rep. Frank Moran

Not responding to the annual municipal census will no longer result in being dropped from the active voter rolls (but the municipal census will continue for data collection and jury selection). Instead, voters' names will go on the inactive list if information that they have moved from the city or town is received from the U.S. Postal Service's national change of address program, from the multistate Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), or from official notice by another jurisdiction.

H.701, An Act enforcing accessibility for voters with disabilities

Sponsor: Rep. Kay Khan

Requires the Secretary of State to arrange inspection of all polling places and early voting sites at least once every four years to ensure compliance with federal and state disability accessibility laws, and to report on progress annually. Cities and towns not in compliance must take immediate action to comply and file a compliance plan.

H.656, An Act providing uniform mail voting forms

Sponsor: Rep. Shirley Arriaga

Requires uniform mail voting applications, instructions, ballot styles, envelopes, and other papers and electronic documents, without distinguishing separate forms for early voting by mail and absentee voting.

Maternal Health

S.1415, An Act relative to birthing justice

Sponsor: Senator Liz Miranda

S.1415 is responding to the complex crisis in maternal and infant health care that the Report of the Special Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health published in 2022. Almost two times as many Black women compared to white women in our state die from pregnancy-related and postpartum complications. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics show a startling 60% percent increase in maternal mortality rates in just the two years between 2019 and 2021.

Pregnant and postpartum individuals in Massachusetts need more comprehensive medical and behavioral health care before and after delivery to reduce deaths and severe

complications. Increasing access to midwife and doula services are associated with much better outcomes for both infants and parents than we currently have in our state. Many lethal outcomes happen after birthing, so it is critical to provide extra care up to a year after delivery through doula and mental health services in addition to care from obstetricians. Good behavioral health care must include depression screenings. Enhancing local health agencies will increase knowledge about good practices which is expected to translate into better maternal/infant health care.

This omnibus bill:

- Establishes and regulates a Board of Registration in Midwifery within the Department of Public Health (DPH), and updates numerous general laws to incorporate references to this new Board or to licensed midwives.
- Requires Medicaid to provide coverage of screenings by pediatricians for postpartum depression.
- Requires DPH to establish local health agencies.
- Requires DPH to evaluate workforce expertise and capacity along with in-depth fetal infant mortality reviews.
- Requires Medicaid coverage for doula services.
- Establishes a mother's right to have their birth doula's continuous presence during labor and delivery.
- Requires that newborns be screened for congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV).
- Expands the §51A mandatory reporting statute to require health care providers involved in the delivery or care of infants to report in-utero substance exposure or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorder.
- Requires additional safety regulations for the governing and operation of licensed birth centers.

Firearms

[HD4607](#), An Act modernizing firearm laws

Sponsor: Rep. Michael Day

Rewrites the law governing the sale and possession of firearms in the Commonwealth. This 140-page omnibus bill 1) clarifies laws for gun owners by streamlining and codifying existing licensing practices, 2) combats the rise in illegal firearms flowing into Massachusetts, and 3) protects our communities from gun violence.

Important provisions include:

- Provides tools for law enforcement to target illegal gun trafficking by including an enhanced tracing system to track firearms used in crimes.
- Modernizes the existing firearm registration system, and increases the availability of firearm data for academic and policy use.
- Enhances requirements for reporting lost, stolen and surrendered firearms.
- Standardizes training requirements for individuals seeking a license to carry.
- Requires live firearm training.
- Allows school administrators, medical professionals, and employers to seek emergency protective orders against gun owners who pose a risk of causing bodily injury to themselves or others.
- Clarifies where individuals may lawfully carry a firearm by explicitly prohibiting the carrying of firearms in schools, polling places, government buildings and into private property without the permission of the owner.
- Ensures that Massachusetts laws remain in compliance with the Bruen SCOTUS decision.

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- Ensures that Massachusetts laws remain in compliance with the Bruen SCOTUS decision.
 - Streamlines the process of obtaining a license to carry (LTC).
 - Clarifies existing assault-style firearms and large capacity prohibitions.
 - Closes loopholes that allow the modification of legal firearms into illegal automatic weapons.
 - Requires the registration and serialization of receivers and barrels, two parts necessary in the manufacturing of guns.
 - Criminalizes building and selling untraceable ghost guns

Senate Bill TBD

Sponsor: Senator Cindy Creem

The Senate is currently meeting with stakeholders and developing a consensus in the Senate. They are focused on including provisions surrounding ghost guns, data collection, Glock triggers that speed up the rate of fire, and other measures.

PFAS (forever chemicals)

[H.2197 /S.1356](#), An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS

Sponsors: Rep. Kate Hogan, Sen. Julian Cyr

This bill broadly implements the recommendations of the April 2022 PFAS Interagency Task Force report. These chemicals, Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), are the single biggest toxic chemical threat we face as a nation and they are ubiquitous. Everything that is water- or stain-resistant or repellent uses them. They are in lipstick, toilet paper and artificial turf, to name only a few. **The most important part of the bill is that it “turns off the tap” of toxic PFAS by phasing in the banning of their use in almost all products.** These chemicals have been determined to cause testicular cancer and are associated with many other health problems by interfering with the immune and endocrine systems.

Our ask for this bill is that all senators and representatives actively support and push for this when it comes out of the Joint Committee on Public Health. A favorable committee report is almost assured, but getting it to a floor vote will require concerted effort to influence leadership.

These four bills have been selected for our focus today from our comprehensive legislative agenda. LWVMA is working hard on 160+ bills in our specialists’ areas. To see the full list of bills we are following this session, [take a look at our website](#).

Tips on Lobbying

What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is part of participation in the democratic process, an extension of the right to be heard, and is an important form of advocacy and public policy participation. The goal of League lobbying is to produce a vote by a legislator in line with our position. Lobbying to convince a legislator of the merits of your position requires an understanding of the rationale that supports that position. The goal is to influence on the basis of your knowledge and understanding of the issue.

Why is the League Unique When It Comes to Lobbying?

There is no shortage of paid lobbyists and special interests who aggressively try to influence legislators on public policy. State legislators, however, are most responsive to their constituents. They need to know that a specific issue is a priority in their community, and it takes the people who live and work in the community to convince them. League members, as constituents, are the most credible messengers because legislators are well aware that the League of Women Voters acts, advocates, and lobbies on positions that have been established through thoughtful study and consensus.

If you are participating remotely, please call or email your senator and representative today as part of our lobby day.

Sample Script for Lobbying Calls

Many legislators share a phone receptionist with a committee; if you get a committee response, just ask for your legislator and you will be transferred.

Hello. My name is _____, and I am (Sen./Rep) _____'s constituent in (town) _____. I'm calling today as part of the League of Women Voters' lobby day.

We are asking your support for four League priority bills.

1. Elections and Voting: [S.410](#), An Act making voting administrative changes to create equitable systemic solutions (ACCESS Act) (One bill in Senate and four separate bills in House)

[H.688](#), An Act establishing same day registration of voters

[H.707](#), An Act decoupling the municipal census from voter registration

[H.701](#), An Act enforcing accessibility for voters with disabilities

[H.656](#), An Act providing uniform mail voting forms

2. Maternal Health: [S.1415](#), An Act relative to birthing justice

3. Firearms: ([HD4420](#), An Act modernizing firearm laws, Senate bill to be filed)

4. PFAS (forever chemicals): [H.2197](#) / [S.1356](#), An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS

We ask that you urge leadership to report these bills out of committee favorably and bring them to the floor for a vote.

I will send a follow-up email with the League's reasons for supporting these four bills.

Thank you for your time.

Sample follow-up email. Send it to your senator and representative, and, if you talked to a staff person, to that person as well.

Subject line: LWVMA priority legislation

I am following up as part of the League of Women Voters' lobby day. I'm asking you to support the League's four priority bills this session:

1. **Elections and Voting:** [S.410](#), An Act making voting administrative changes to create equitable systemic solutions (ACCESS Act) (One bill in Senate and four separate bills in House)
[H.688](#), An Act establishing same day registration of voters
[H.707](#), An Act decoupling the municipal census from voter registration
[H.701](#), An Act enforcing accessibility for voters with disabilities
[H.656](#), An Act providing uniform mail voting forms
2. **Maternal Health:** [S.1415](#), An Act relative to birthing justice
3. **Firearms:** ([HD4420](#), An Act modernizing firearm laws, Senate bill to be filed)
4. **PFAS (forever chemicals):** [H.2197](#) / [S.1356](#), An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS

We ask that you urge leadership to report these bills out of committee favorably and bring them to the floor for a vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

(Your name and full street address)

Thank you for your lobbying efforts. You make a difference.

Legislative Action Committee

The [Legislative Action Committee](#) (LAC) is a team of volunteer specialists in various areas who identify key legislation, recommend League support or opposition, track the bills through the legislative session, lobby legislators and committees, prepare and present written and oral testimony, and recommend and prepare action alerts when needed.

Legislative Specialists encourage League members who are interested in closely following an area of legislation or a specific bill, to contact them and be added to that specialist's "team" for notifications of committee hearings and other activities related to specific legislation.

We also have a Legislative Envoy program. Volunteer envoys provide a direct link between the Legislative Action Committee and local Leagues, so that local Leagues can help influence the legislators who represent them. See the program description [here](#). If you are interested, contact Envoy Coordinator Mary Cummings at mcummings@lwmva.org.

Jen Muroff, Chair

Legislative Specialists

Affordable Housing—Lori Stewart, Lucy Kennedy
Basic Human Needs—Clare Gordon
Children and Family Issues—Palma McLaughlin
Criminal Legal System—Nancy Bettinger
Education (Policy)—Robin Chen
Elder Affairs—Pat Costello
Elections and Voting—Nancy Brumback, Nell Forgacs
Environment: Climate Emergency—Launa Zimmaro
Environment: Natural Resources—Carolyn Lee
Fiscal Policy—June Michaels
Good Governance—Carolyn Lee
Gun Control—Art Desloges
Health Care—Ellen Church
Immigration—Amy Cooper
Racial Justice—Felina Silver
Transportation—Franny Osman, Lois Levin
Women's Issues—Jan Soma

To reach any of the Legislative Specialists, email specialists@lwmva.org.

Additional Online Resources

- [The Citizen Lobbyist](#) A handbook on how the legislature works and how to lobby effectively
- [LWVMA Supported/Opposed Legislation 2023-24](#)
- [Massachusetts Legislature](#)
- [How to find your legislator](#)