

BULLETIN

League of Women Voters
Arlington, Massachusetts

www.lwva.com

October 2011

Calendar

10/10	Monday 7 p.m.	LWVA Board meeting at Patti Muldoon's home, 67 Smith St. All members welcome. See page 2 for directions.
10/11	Tuesday 7:30 p.m.	Tuesday Night Conversation, "Revered and Reviled: Competing Images of Muhammad," with Professor Kecia Ali and guests. Arlington High School Learning Commons, 869 Mass. Ave. See page 9 for details.
10/25	Tuesday 7:30 p.m.	Tuesday Night Conversation, "Health Care Reform: Where Are We Now?," with political scientist Andrea Campbell and guests. Arlington High School Learning Commons, 869 Mass. Ave. Co-sponsored by the LWVA. See page 9 for details.

LWVA members Kim Haase and Meredith Zona speak with an active citizen on Town Day. The League registered over 20 new voters.

Many thanks to our volunteers, who also included Pat Lieberman, Patti Muldoon, Phyllis Maddox, Angela Olszewski, and Carolyn Parsons.

Photo by Phyllis Maddox



Carolyn Parsons and Angela Olszewski: Co-Presidents
CarolynMParsons@msn.com, amolshzewski@gmail.com
Ann FitzGerald: Membership AnnFitz@rcn.com

Kim Haase: Bulletin Editor c.haase@comcast.net
Margaret Reiners: Bulletin Mailing mlreiners@gmail.com

Co-President's Message

As a member of the League of Women Voters of Arlington, you have opportunities to engage, participate, and make a difference:

- Learn** Attend programs, meetings, and forums to stay abreast of current public policy issues. Discuss topics of importance with our local officials and community leaders.
- Write** Observe a public committee meeting, participate in a League activity, or research an issue; offer to submit an article for our monthly bulletin.
- Voter Service** Promote the importance of civic engagement by participating in League activities such as voter registration at Town Day, monitoring elections, or volunteering to help with Candidates' Night.
- Action** Make your voice heard and encourage study or action on issues important to you.

Read our newsletter, check the website, or contact a board member to find upcoming events and see what's happening with our League. We look forward to hearing from you!

Angela Olszewski

Directions to Patti Muldoon's home, 67 Smith Street:

Take Mass. Ave. to Arlington Heights, then

- Left up hill on Dundee (across from Trader Joe's)
- Right on Arnold
- Left up hill on Williams
- Right on Smith St.

If you're coming down Park Avenue, you can take Wollaston to Wilbur to Williams to Smith.

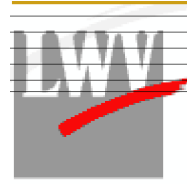
67 Smith St. is the brick house on the corner.

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2011–2012

Carolyn Parsons, Co-President	781-646-9309
Angela Olszewski, Co-President	781-648-8649
Meredith Zona, Organization VP	781-648-2753
Patricia Muldoon, Action VP	781-648-1019
Patricia Lieberon, Local Action VP	781-646-1987
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Katharine Fennelly, Voters' Guide	781-648-1794
Kim Haase, Bulletin Editor	781-643-3429
Margaret Reiners, Bulletin Mailing	781-646-9611
Janice Bakey, Email Coordinator	781-643-4345
Phyllis Maddox, Webmistress	781-646-4362

The BULLETIN is published monthly except during the summer and December by the League of Women Voters of Arlington, PO Box 461, Arlington, MA 02476.

LWVUS National Consensus Study: Role of the Federal Government in Public Education



The Arlington League encourages every local member to participate in the upcoming National Consensus Study on the **Role of the Federal Government in Public Education**. The scope of the study is broad and includes the following areas under the role of the federal government in public education (pre-K through grade 12): the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments which are required for many federal grant programs but are national, not federal. The discussion will focus upon how the new standards called Common Core State Standards will be used by the federal government.

Here's how YOU can participate:

BECOME INFORMED – The National Study webpage at http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=167&ContentID=16957 has links to quick summaries and in-depth information on public education issues. Before November 30, 2011 the Arlington League will hold a Public Education Consensus meeting to vote on the consensus questions. The Winchester League has asked if Arlington League members might be interested in having a joint meeting. Time and place are yet to be determined. You will be notified by email with specifics.

HISTORY

"From the beginning of our Republic, a well-educated citizenry was thought to be essential to protect liberty and the general welfare of the people. Even before the Constitution was established, the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 included responsibilities of the nation for an education system." Later, when the Constitution was adopted, in Article 1, Section 8, Congress was granted the power to provide for the general welfare of the United States. It is under this "general welfare" clause that the federal government has assumed the power to initiate educational activity and work with states, agencies, and individuals in educational activities. In 1867, the original Department of Education was established. Meanwhile, over the last two centuries, the federal government has passed a variety of educational reforms, including legislation mandating equal access to education for minorities and people with disabilities, a GI Bill after WWII, college loans, and vocational education. The most recent authorization of the ESEA was called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Congress is currently in a debate and stalemate over the reauthorization of the ESEA, President Obama's Blueprint for Reform. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/publicationtoc.html>

Consensus Questions

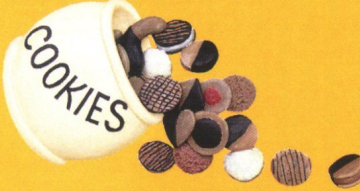
General Questions

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is

Much too small Too small About right Too large Much too large

Continued on page 5

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Initial Free Consultation for League Members

LWVUS Education Consensus Study (continued)

2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
- To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.
 - To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - To monitor state efforts for funding.
 - To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.
- Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Common Core Standards Questions

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)
- Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
 - All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding
 - All programs receiving federal funding from any source
 - All of the above
 - None of the above
5. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common core standards?
- Yes | No
- If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)
 - Voluntary
 - Mandated
 - Mandated, if fully funded
 - If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)
 - Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
 - Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.
 - Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically.
6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)
- A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
 - A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
 - A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
 - No national curriculum.

Continued on next page

LWVUS Education Consensus Study (continued)

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)

- a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
- b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
- c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
- d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
- e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.

8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)

- a. Data should be "norm referenced" (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
- b. Data should be "criterion referenced" and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
- c. Data should be used to determine "cut" scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.

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LWVUS Education Consensus Study (continued)

9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):

- a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
- b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
- c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
- d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
- e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs

Funding and Equity

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

- a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
- b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
- c. Competitive grants only
- d. No federal funding

11. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)

- a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
- b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
- c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
- d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
- e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)

- a. High quality teaching/learning
- b. Adequate and current learning materials
- c. Clean and well maintained physical facilities
- d. Food and health care
- e. Safe and secure neighborhoods
- f. Secure housing

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered "categorical" rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Continued on next page

LWVUS Education Consensus Study (continued)

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g. Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

b. This funding should be extended to:

All children Only those with special needs Special needs first

Arlington Community Education Offers Tuesday Night Conversations in October

Several local organizations, including the League of Women Voters of Arlington, have joined with Arlington Community Education to co-sponsor a series of three dynamic panel discussions on issues of current concern. The conversations are moderated by *Fortune* magazine editor-at-large and Arlington resident David Whitford and take place in the Arlington High Learning Commons at 7:30 p.m. There is a fee of \$5 for each discussion. Pre-registration is recommended, but not required; contact Arlington Community Education at 781-316-3568 or follow the instructions on the web site at <http://arlingtoncommunityed.org>. The first event took place in September.

Tuesday, October 11

Revered & Reviled: Competing Images of Muhammad

With Professor Kecia Ali & guests

People sometimes speak of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. This conversation will examine a reality that is much more complex and interesting. Muslims and Christians have understood and misunderstood each other over the centuries, and many key points of contention emerge around the figure of Muhammad. Looking at how writers have portrayed him historically reveals major shifts in attitudes toward women, war, revelation, and miracles. We will also explore the irreversible entanglement of Muslim and non-Muslim thinking about religion and the role of great men in an enlightened world. This event is co-sponsored by the Arlington Human Rights Commission. *Kecia Ali, Ph.D., teaches in the Religion Department at Boston University. Her books include Sexual Ethics and Islam, Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam, and a forthcoming biography of the 9th-century Muslim jurist al-Shafi'i. She lives in Arlington with her family.*

Tuesday, October 25

Health Care Reform: Where Are We Now?

With political scientist Andrea Campbell & guests

The historic Affordable Care Act of 2010 promised to spread coverage to the uninsured and rein in the worst practices of insurance companies. Where does implementation stand now and what's happening with legal challenges to the legislation? Are states doing their part? How is public opinion trending? We'll discuss whether those beginning to experience the ACA's benefits are satisfied and how those who were worried about the law's impact—such as seniors on Medicare or workers with employer-provided insurance—are feeling now. And how is it that this reform passed at all, after a century's worth of failed efforts? **This event is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Arlington.** *Andrea Campbell, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Political Science at MIT. She is the author of books on Social Security, Medicare and U.S. tax policy and politics.*

We welcome new members at all times.
Contact Ann FitzGerald, annfitz@rcn.com, if you have any questions.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARLINGTON
Membership Application/Renewal Form

Fiscal Year runs from April 1 to March 31

Name _____ Precinct _____ Date _____
Address _____ Zip _____ Occupation _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

_____ Please indicate if you do NOT want your contact information sent to Arlington League members

_____ Basic Membership Dues..... \$50
_____ 2nd member in household \$23
_____ Student (full-time) \$20
_____ Contribution to help the LWV in Arlington, add \$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

If \$50 is a hardship, please pay what you can and let us know that this is your dues payment.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: League of Women Voters of Arlington
MAIL TO: Ann FitzGerald, 162 Summer St., Unit 1, Arlington, MA 02474

Please check areas of interest and activity even if you can't be actively involved THIS year.

SPECIAL LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

- Join the Board. Position: _____
Action: phone calls _____ letters _____
Bulletin: mailing _____ soliciting ads _____
Membership
Nominating Committee
Publicity Writer
Voter Service: Rides to the polls _____
Candidates Night
Voters' Guide
Attend State League's Phonathon
Be a discussion leader at local meetings
Fundraising activities
Offer meeting refreshments
Post fliers and deliver brochures
Host a meeting in my home
Monitor elections for nonprofit organizations

FOLLOW ISSUES, KEEP LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY INFORMED

- Congress/Presidency/Election Process
Discrimination/Equal Employment/Civil Rights
Education/Child Care
Environment/Recycling
Health Care
Justice/Courts/Prisons
Land Use
Taxation/Budgets/Deficits
Transportation/Urban Policy
Voting Rights
Warrant Articles Review
Welfare Policies/Basic Human Needs
Women's Issues
Zoning/Community Development/Land Use

OBSERVE AT TOWN BOARD MEETINGS*

- Selectmen (Mondays)
Redevelopment Board (Mondays)
School Committee (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)
Conservation Commission (1st & 3rd Thurs.)
Housing Authority

SKILLS LEAGUE COULD DRAW ON

- Computer database
Graphic design
Desktop publishing
Web site maintenance
Membership development
Moderating meetings
Fundraising
Writing articles
Other

BEST TIME TO CALL YOU:

(for phone tree reminders) Call before _____ o'clock

*Some of these can be seen on cable TV

LWVM Phonathon Returns!

After a year, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is reinstating its fall phonathon.

Watch for an email or a letter from the League this month.

If you contribute before October 21, you will not be called.

If you contribute before October 21 and contribute \$100 or more, the Arlington League will receive 15% of your contribution. Early contributions under \$100 go to the State League only.

If you wait to be called, the local League of the member who calls you will receive 10% of your contribution in any amount. If you'd like to help steer League members' generous donations to the LWVA, please join the Phonathon.

Contact Angela Olszewski at amolszewski@gmail.com or 781-648-8649.

October 2011

League of Women Voters of Arlington
Post Office Box 461
Arlington, MA 02476

