



BULLETIN

League of Women Voters
Arlington, Massachusetts
www.lwva.com

October 2018

Calendar

10/2	Tuesday 7:00 to 8:45 p.m.	Forum on the three November state ballot questions (see page 7 for LWVMA positions), Robbins Library Community Room, 700 Mass. Ave. Sponsored by the Arlington Democratic Town Committee. (The state Democratic Party positions on the ballot questions happen to be the same as the League's.)
10/10	Wednesday 7 p.m.	LWVA Board meeting at Kim Haase's home, 88 Park Ave., Apt. 401. All members welcome. Directions on page 2.
10/14	Sunday 2:30 to 4 p.m.	Welcome party and introduction to the LWVA for new and prospective members, Robbins Library Community Room, 700 Mass. Ave. See page 5 for details.
10/17	Wednesday 8 p.m.	Deadline to register for the November election.
10/22	Monday	Early voting begins and runs through Friday, November 2. Information on early voting schedules is available at http://www.massearlyvote.com/ .
11/6	Tuesday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.	General Election. If you can give rides to the polls, please let Phyllis Maddox know. Details on last page.

We extend a warm welcome to our newest member:

Jennifer Litowski, 76 Oxford St., 02474

Carolyn Parsons and Angela Olszewski: Co-Presidents
CarolynMParsons@msn.com, amolszewski@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

Dear League Members,

I wish that I could say that the bedroom air conditioner has once again been moved to the rear of a closet. As I write this note it is still decidedly sticky. Showers come and go with much needed moisture for our gardens. I just prefer that fall would arrive.

Phyllis Maddox, my husband George, and I were on Mass. Ave. before 7:20 AM (not to put too fine a point on it) to unload a car full of stuff for the Town Day booth. It seems that a number of people are needed to put up the tent. Volunteers from surrounding booths offered to help, making the task go relatively smoothly. I have been told that there was quite a bit of activity throughout the day. Registering people to vote, providing information and lobbying a bit on two of the ballot questions, and handing out membership material in the League gives the community a human link with these activities. Thank you to all who volunteered their time.

The League is sponsoring a new member/prospective member afternoon get together on the afternoon of October 14. How does the League operate? On which public policy issues do we have a position? Please come and meet your fellow league members and enjoy some light refreshments.

Happy fall!

Carolyn Parsons

Directions to Kim Haase's home, 88 Park Ave., Apt. 401:

88 Park Ave. is the Locke School Condominium building at the corner of Park Ave. and Paul Revere Rd., one block up the hill from Mass. Ave. The building entrance is on Paul Revere Road; push the button for Apt. 401 to be buzzed in.

You should be able to park on the opposite side of Paul Revere, or on Park Ave. or Davis Rd. The lot behind the building is for residents only.

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2018–2019

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
Joan Martin, Treasurer	617-966-4521
Anne Linn, Secretary	781-643-0356
Ann FitzGerald, Membership Director	781-646-9711
Katharine Fennelly, Voters' Guide	781-648-1794
Kim Haase, Bulletin Editor	781-643-3429
Margaret Reiners, Bulletin Mailing, Voters Service Committee	781-646-9611
Janice Bakey, Email Coordinator	781-643-4345
Colleen Kirby, Board Member at Large	781-648-2447
Nancy Gray, Board Member at Large	781-646-4590
Susan Born, Voters Service Cmte	617-448-4179
Wendy Forgie, Voters Service Cmte	617-669-2052
Mel Goldsipe, Voters Service Cmte	781-325-2778
Paulette Schwartz, Voters Service Cmte	781-646-1722

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.

A Busy Town Day

Good weather on Town Day, September 15, brought many visitors to the League’s booth. We registered seven new voters, signed up four for absentee ballots, and took seven change of address cards. Many people asked about the League and about our positions on the ballot questions.



Ann Fitzgerald, Liz Blumenthal, and Jane Culbert welcome visitors to the booth.

Photo by Phyllis Maddox



Carolyn Parsons and Jane Culbert are ready to welcome folks at the start of Town Day.

Photo by Phyllis Maddox

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Welcome Party for New and Prospective Members October 14

The LWVA is hosting a party
and information session for those who've joined
the League in the last few years
and for anyone who's thought of joining but
hasn't yet.

**Sunday, October 14
2:30 to 4 p.m.
Community Room
Robbins Library
700 Mass. Ave.**

Meet League members new and old and learn
about what we do!
All are welcome.

Refreshments will be served.

Call Ann Fitzgerald, 781-646-9711, for more
information.



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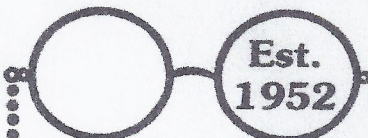


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League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Positions on Ballot Questions



Question 1: To pass a law relative to patient safety.

LWVMA takes no stand on this ballot question.

This proposed law would limit how many patients could be assigned to each registered nurse in Massachusetts hospitals and certain other health care facilities. The maximum number of patients per registered nurse would vary by type of unit and level of care, spelled out in detail in the question. The proposed law would require a covered facility to comply with the patient assignment limits without reducing its level of nursing, service, maintenance, clerical, professional, and other staff.

The League's stated goal for health care is: "An affordable health care system that provides equal access to quality health care for all." One side on this ballot question argues this measure provides for quality health care; the other side argues this measure would damage the health care system financially and make care unaffordable. LWVMA's position could be interpreted to support both sides, and so LWVMA is not taking a stand on this question.

Question 2: To establish a citizens commission concerning a Constitutional amendment to secure government of the people.

LWVMA supports this question and urges a YES vote.

This proposed law would create a citizens commission to consider and recommend potential amendments to the United States Constitution to establish that corporations do not have the same Constitutional rights as human beings and that campaign contributions and expenditures may be regulated. Any resident of Massachusetts who is a United States citizen would be able to apply for appointment to the 15-member commission, and members would serve without compensation. The commission's first report would be due December 31, 2019.

The national League position states that the League could support a Constitutional amendment if it meets certain criteria. Therefore, studying the impact of a Constitutional amendment, as this ballot question recommends, would be consistent with supporting an amendment only after careful consideration. Supporting this question does not commit the League to supporting any recommended amendment.

Question 3: To retain the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

LWVMA supports this question and urges a YES vote.

This ballot question asks if voters approve of the current law, passed in 2016, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity in places of public accommodation. This current law protects the rights of transgender individuals. A yes vote is to keep the current law in place. A no vote is to repeal the law. The exact wording of the question is: "Do you approve of a law summarized below, which was approved by the House of Representatives by a vote of 117-36 on July 7, 2016, and approved by the Senate by a voice vote on July 7, 2016?"

The League supports equal rights for all. Our goal is to secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all and to promote social and economic justice, and the health and safety of all Americans. LWVMA has joined the "Freedom for All Massachusetts" Coalition (<https://www.freedommassachusetts.org/>) in support of a yes vote for this question.

Detailed information on each of the ballot questions is available on the Secretary of State's website: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/e/e/>

State League provides Voter's Guide for November 6 Election

Starting October 10, check out LWVMA's new Online Voters' Guide to the general election at <https://www.InformedVoterMA.org>, and pass the link on to your friends and network.

Our guide is designed to eliminate the hassle of scrolling through dozens of candidates who won't appear on your ballot. You can explore your personalized ballot simply by typing in your street address. Our guide features information about all candidates on the ballot in Massachusetts, as well as candidates' responses to questions posed by LWVMA.

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The LWVMA Study on the Massachusetts Ballot Question Process

Two years ago the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts voted to study the ballot question process in our state, and a study committee was formed to research the topic, compile background materials, and design consensus questions.

Ballot questions have been around since the formation of the Commonwealth, but the process for allowing citizens to initiate laws, amendments, and repeals has only been in effect for the past 100 years. The 1919 state election was the first time citizen-initiated ballot questions appeared, as a result of an amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution (Article XLVIII) in 1918.

The State League has no position on ballot questions in general, though it takes positions on specific questions in accordance with its program (see page 7 for examples). Ballot question procedures are different in every state, so we can't concur with another state's study. League members and others who have been involved with ballot questions have observed aspects of the ballot question process that would be worth studying, thus enabling LWVMA to have positions on the process in Massachusetts. If the League decides that changes would be worth implementing, it could propose steps to advocate for such changes.

The scope of this LWVMA study is to

- Review the Massachusetts laws and regulations that govern statewide citizen-initiated ballot questions (initiative and referendum process)
- Consider the consequences of current laws and regulations
- Propose concrete next steps that LWVMA could take to enact change, if the study results in recommended change

Study materials are posted on the LWVMA website at <https://lwwma.org/the-lwwma-study-on-the-massachusetts-ballot-question-process/> (as of this writing, it's not quite all there yet).

The consensus questions will appear in the November/December Bulletin, and Arlington League members will meet in January in Winchester, along with Winchester League members, to consider and vote on the questions. There's a great deal of background material, as always with a League study, so we encourage members to read and consider this material over the next few months and to attend one of the webinars

Join a Ballot Question Study Webinar

The ballot question process study committee will present a webinar on the study, with four times available, each covering the same material. Topics will include an overview of the study, study materials, role of local Leagues/Units/MALs, consensus meetings, reporting consensus results, and getting further help.

Information about signing up for a webinar will be sent to all members in October.

By offering webinars at different times, we hope to reach as many people as possible. One of the webinars will be recorded and will be available for viewing. Scheduled webinars are:

October 15	Monday	7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
October 17	Wednesday	11:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.
November 13	Tuesday	7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
November 14	Wednesday	3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Primary Voting at the Middlesex Jail and House of Corrections

By Colleen Kirby

On August 29, 2018 at noon, League of Women Voters of Arlington members Mary Cummings and I, and BallotsOverBars member Elly Kalfus (<http://emancipationinitiative.org/ballots-over-bars/>), met up with Brendan Kennedy of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office at the Middlesex Jail and House of Corrections waiting room. Although the election was on Tuesday, September 4, we weren't able to schedule an earlier date because the new education director, John Howard, was being trained.

After turning in our drivers' licenses to the main office and going through the security screening, we took the bus up to the main facility. Once inside a classroom, we waited for our first group of 7 men from the jail, awaiting trial, to come in and fill out their absentee ballot request forms. In Massachusetts, if a person is held in custody, they do not have to be a registered voter in order to request a ballot as the state knows their identity. Most of the men were already registered, but 2 filled out registration forms.

One of the men was very excited to be requesting a ballot as he told us this was his first time ever voting, and that he was already 52. After these men returned to their living pods, the next group of 3 men, who were serving time in the House of Corrections for misdemeanor offenses, came in to fill out their absentee ballot requests. We were able to answer questions about choosing a ballot, whether for Republican, Democratic, or Libertarian primary candidates.

Of the 10 people voting, there were 9 different Town Clerk offices where the ballot requests had to be returned. As the election was fast approaching, Mary went home to fax in the ballot requests to 5 communities, while Elly and I drove around to 4 Election Offices — Billerica, Tewksbury, Boston and Cambridge — before they closed for the day to make sure the forms were properly processed in time. In one case, although the individual had requested a ballot for one party, they were sent a ballot for the opposite party as they had been registered in that party already. John Howard was able to have them change their party affiliation for the next primary as it was too close to the deadline to make the change in time for this primary. Another town clerk, in Framingham, did not honor the request for a ballot as they had no record of that individual having lived in the town.

We are trying to set up another date to go to the Middlesex Jail and House of Corrections before the general election with enough time leeway so we can better follow up with any problem ballot requests. At least 9 of these 10 individuals should already be set for the general election if they are still in custody, but there are over 900 other eligible individuals we could assist if they are interested in voting in November.

Criminal Justice Reform Bill Implementation

By Colleen Kirby

On September 12, 2018, I gave a talk to the League of Women Voters of Concord and Carlisle on the state of the criminal justice reform passed in April. Although the legislature passed comprehensive reforms, in order for these reforms to take root, it is essential that our district attorneys change their practices to decrease incarceration rates. This is why the League cosponsored the District Attorney Candidates Night before the primary. Fortunately both Middlesex District Attorney candidates vied for being the most progressive, so it is hoped that we will see an increase in the number of people who are diverted, as well as an increase in those who access restorative justice and other rehabilitative programming, and fewer people being held pretrial.

To see the biggest change, this legislation will need to change institutional attitudes. Will the Commonwealth focus on rehabilitation rather than on custody as the best way to ensure that when people reenter society, they will be good neighbors and productive members of society? Does this legislation address many barriers that keep people from succeeding rather than recidivating? To keep an eye on this, the legislation proposes 29 commissions and task forces to oversee the various areas of change. Sen. Cindy Friedman is on a task force for Justice Involved Women and also on one to develop a pilot program for a Restoration Center to address the needs of individuals in crisis, primarily those with mental health issues or substance abuse disorder.

As Senate Judiciary Chair Will Brownsberger said about the reforms: "We want to lift people up instead of locking them up. And we want to cut away the web of bureaucratic entanglements that make it hard for them to get back on their feet."

The reforms the League of Women Voters supported that made it into the bill include the following:

- Eliminating many mandatory minimum sentences
- Allowing for release on parole for some mandatory minimum sentences to encourage participation in rehabilitative programs
- Increasing the felony larceny threshold to \$1200
- Releasing terminally ill or incapacitated individuals to parole
- A mechanism to expunge records of the falsely accused or for some offenses by youths under age 21
- A process to more quickly seal felony or misdemeanor records, including for resisting arrest

These reforms should reduce the criminalization of poverty by eliminating some parole and probation fines and fees, and to allow for mechanisms to waive some fees if they would cause undue hardship. The bill prevents some record releases to make it more likely for individuals to be able to find housing, jobs, get occupational licenses or go to school. It also limits or prevents some bail fees and prevents removal of drivers' licenses if an offense doesn't involve driving.

(Continued on next page)

Criminal Justice Reform Bill Implementation (Continued)

These reforms also include raising the juvenile age to 12 (from 7), but the bill doesn't increase the upper age beyond 18. It does authorize jails and HOCs to create special units for age 18-24. And it halts the school to prison pipeline by keeping school-based misconduct in the schools. It also requires that youth have access to counsel at parole hearings.

To limit pretrial detention, a pretrial services agency will be created that includes reminder mechanisms so they are more likely to make it to their court dates, and allows for some individuals to access non-punitive programs and services. To decrease incarceration, the bill encourages diversion programs, especially for veterans, those with substance abuse disorders, and people with mental health issues. And it increases access to restorative justice programs for juveniles and adults.

These reforms also include oversight and data collection on segregation and solitary confinement starting in December. The bill prevents segregation of pregnant women, juveniles, those with serious mental illnesses. It also prohibits segregation solely on the basis of being an at-risk or LGBTQI individual. There must also be a plan in place for any individual to be able to work their way out of solitary.

There will also be mandatory police training in bias reduction and de-escalation, a task force to study correctional officer suicide prevention, oversight of forensic labs and techniques, data collection and transparency of the system, and increase in access to compensation for wrongful convictions.

But none of this will happen unless we the people keep our eye on the process. We need to keep the pressure on to see incarceration rates decrease, to see an increase in diversion, to see a lower recidivism rate, and to see the Commonwealth reach levels nearer to our NATO allies. We need to see the reports promised by the 29 task forces and committees to make sure that this legislation is implemented in full.

I plan to attend the public meetings for the Restoration Center pilot project in Middlesex County, but there are many other committees and task forces that need public oversight. Please let me know if you would like a list (781-648-2447).

We welcome new members at all times. Thank you for your support.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARLINGTON Membership Application/Renewal Form

Fiscal Year runs from April 1 to March 31

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

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

Basic Membership Dues, 2nd member in household, Student, Contribution to help the LWV in Arlington, add, TOTAL ENCLOSED

If \$60 is a hardship, please pay what you can and let us know that this is your dues payment.

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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

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

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October 2018

League of Women Voters of Arlington
Post Office Box 461
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