



BULLETIN
lwva.com

September 2021

Calendar

Tuesday September 7 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting at Carolyn Parsons' home, 23 Brewster Road. All members welcome. We'll be meeting on Carolyn's screen porch, with plenty of ventilation. Directions on page 2.
Wed. or Thu. September 15 or 16	LWVA members needed for an AHA tenant council election. See below.

League Volunteers Needed!

The residents of Menotomy Manor, one of the Arlington Housing Authority developments, are forming a tenants' association. Jack Cooper, director of the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants, has been assisting them. They have completed the nominations for an election for a tenant council.

The election will be held on either **September 15 or September 16**, possibly from 5 to 7 p.m. The date will depend on how many LWVA members can help with the election. The duties usually involve sitting at a table to receive the ballots, and then staying to tabulate the votes, which commonly takes another hour or two.

If you'd like to volunteer for either day, please call Carolyn Parsons at 781-646-9309 or email her at CarolynMParsons@msn.com.

Co-President's Message

I hope everyone had a great summer. We are looking forward to starting our programs and activities, although it is unclear how often we will be able to meet in person. I think we all thought that we would be in the new normal by now.

As I look back on 2020 and the beginning of 2021, I would like to thank everyone who helped keep our agenda moving and planned or attended our virtual events. Great appreciation goes to ACMi for hosting our virtual Candidates Night. I am hoping that will be our one and only one!

We won't be having Town Day this year, but we look forward to other event planning. Please reach out to members of the board if you have ideas or are interested in volunteering. We will be scheduling our regular programs in person or virtually as conditions allow. Please watch for emails and the monthly bulletin.

Angela Olszewski

Directions to Carolyn Parsons' home, 23 Brewster Road, Arlmont:

At St. Camillus, the large Catholic church adjacent to the access road for Route 2, go under the overpass, stop at the stop sign, cross the access road on the other side, and proceed straight ahead onto Sagamore Rd., which curves to your right. Go the end of Sagamore, turn left. The house, on your right, has natural cedar shingles and black shutters.

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2021–2022

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	339-223-3300
Joan Martin, Treasurer	617-966-4521
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Janice Bakey, Email Coordinator	781-643-4345
Diana Eastman, Webmistress	774-266-3422
Samantha Dutra, Member at Large	857-266-9570

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.

LWVMA Begins "Meet the Specialists" Programs

By Kim Haase

On August 25 and 26, I attended Zoom programs on criminal justice and election reform sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA). These were highly informative one-hour events that informed us about the bills to which LWVMA has given highest priority for the current legislative session. Watch for announcements of more programs.



Criminal Justice Reform

On August 25, League Specialists Nancy Bettinger and Lucy Costa described three bills that the League is particularly focused on passing, of nine that it supports:

- **Solitary Confinement**, H.2504/S.1578, which would provide criminal justice reform protections to all prisoners in segregated confinement. Sponsored by Reps. Liz Miranda and Lindsay Sabadosa and by Sen. Jamie Eldridge. Arlington Reps. Sean Garballey and Dave Rogers are co-sponsors of the House bill. See the League's summary at <https://lwwma.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/H.2504-and-S.1578-Summary.pdf>.
- **Raise the Age**, H.1826/S.920, which would raise juvenile justice jurisdiction gradually over five years to include young people from 18 through 20 years of age. Sponsors are Reps. James J. O'Day and Kay Khan and Sen. Joseph Boncore. Reps. Garballey and Rogers and Sen. Cindy Friedman are all co-sponsors. See <https://www.raisetheagemma.org/> for more information.
- **Parole Eligibility**, H.1797, which would give all incarcerated people the opportunity for a parole hearing after 25 years, effectively converting sentences of life without parole (LWOP) to life in prison. Massachusetts has far more people serving LWOP sentences than any nearby state. Sponsors are Reps. Liz Miranda and Jay Livingstone. See <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/H1797> for more information.

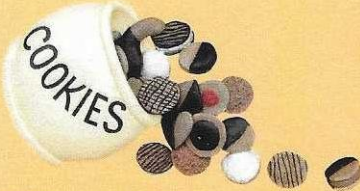
Elections and Voting

On August 26, League Specialists Nancy Brumback and Linda Freedman described four bills that the League is particularly focused on passing. The LWVMA is working with the Election Modernization Coalition, which includes a large number of advocacy groups.

- **VOTES Act**, H.805/S.459, which would, among other things, make permanent many of the changes put in place for the COVID-19 pandemic: Sponsors are Rep. John Lawn and Sen. Cynthia Creem. Reps. Garballey and Rogers and Sen. Cindy Friedman are all co-sponsors. See <https://lwwma.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LWVMA-Testimony-H.805.S.459.pdf> for the League's testimony in support of the bill.

Continued on page 5



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Meet the Specialists (Continued)

- **Support for Parents Running for Office**, H.769/S.475, which would allow child care related to campaigns to be allowed as a campaign expense. Sponsors are Reps. Mike Conolly and Joan Meschino and Sen. Pat Jehlen. Rep. Rogers is a co-sponsor.
- **FARE Act**, H.3547/S.2261, which would make public transportation free on statewide primary and election days throughout the state. Sponsors are Reps. Frank Moran and Chynah Tyler and Sen. Joseph Boncore.
- **Protecting the Voting Rights of Eligible Incarcerated People**, H.836/S.474, which would require officers at correctional facilities to make voting information and materials, including absentee ballot information, readily available to eligible voters who are in pre-trial detention or serving misdemeanor sentences (in case these provisions are dropped from the VOTES Act). Sponsors are Reps. Chynah Tyler and Liz Miranda and Sen. Adam Hinds. Reps. Garballey and Rogers are co-sponsors.

To find more information about a bill, go to <https://malegislature.gov/>, click **Bills & Laws**, and enter the bill number in the search box.

It is particularly urgent that the VOTES Act be passed this fall so that it will be in effect when the current emergency provisions expire. The bill went to the Senate Ways and Means Committee in July, an important step. See page 7 for details.

The League also supports H.825/S.485, which would provide a local option for ranked choice voting (RCV) in municipal elections. Arlington's Town Meeting voted in favor of RCV, but the legislature must pass a home rule petition for it to go into effect. This law would allow towns and cities to adopt RCV for local elections without having to file a home rule petition.

See <https://lwvma.org/advocacy/league-supported-legislation-2/> for a full list of the bills the League is taking positions on for the current session, along with testimony and more details.

The League encourages members to thank their legislators who support these bills and to ask their legislators who aren't yet co-sponsors to support them too. Thanks to all our legislators for their support of the VOTES Act.



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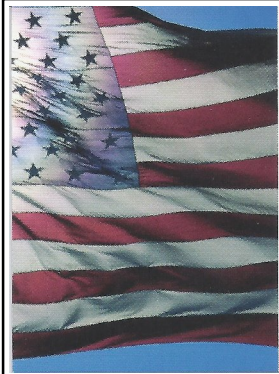
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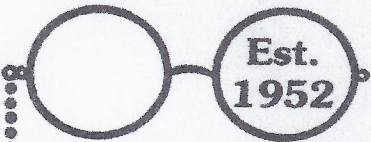
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In Memoriam: Bette Pinckney and Abigail Fair

Bette Pinckney, a member of the League of Women Voters of Arlington for well over 50 years, died January 27 on Cape Cod at the age of 97. We remember her for her tireless advocacy on behalf of the expansion of Robbins Library, which was finally completed in 1994. The Library's fourth floor board room has a plaque in her honor. Unfortunately, we can't find an obituary that would provide more information.

Abigail Fair, who had been a member of the LWVA since 2013, died on May 17 at the age of 81. A longtime resident of New Jersey, she played a major role in protecting that state's freshwater wetlands as a planning board member and town official. For her obituary, go to <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/bostonglobe/name/abigail-fair-obituary?pid=198786780>.

VOTES Act Advances in State Senate

From the State League

Voting rights advocates, public interest groups and a network of state and local organizations praised the July 19 decision by the Massachusetts Legislature's Joint Committee on Elections Laws to send the VOTES Act to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, the first step in bringing the comprehensive voting bill up for a vote.

The VOTES Act will make several permanent changes to Massachusetts' election laws, including: allowing voters to vote by mail without an excuse; expanding early voting options; establishing same day voter registration; ensuring that the Commonwealth joins the 30-state Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) to keep voter registration rolls up-to-date; implementing risk limiting audits, the "gold standard" of post-election audits; making sure that eligible voters who are incarcerated are able to request a mail ballot and vote; and more.

The VOTES Act is strongly supported by the Massachusetts Election Modernization Coalition, an umbrella group working to modernize the Commonwealth's election laws.

"The League of Women Voters applauds the election laws committee for moving quickly to position the VOTES Act for a vote. It is important for the legislature to pass a permanent, comprehensive voting bill to assure full access by all eligible citizens and continued smooth functioning of our election process," said Patricia Comfort, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts. "At a time when too many states are restricting voting access, we are proud of the direction our legislature is taking."



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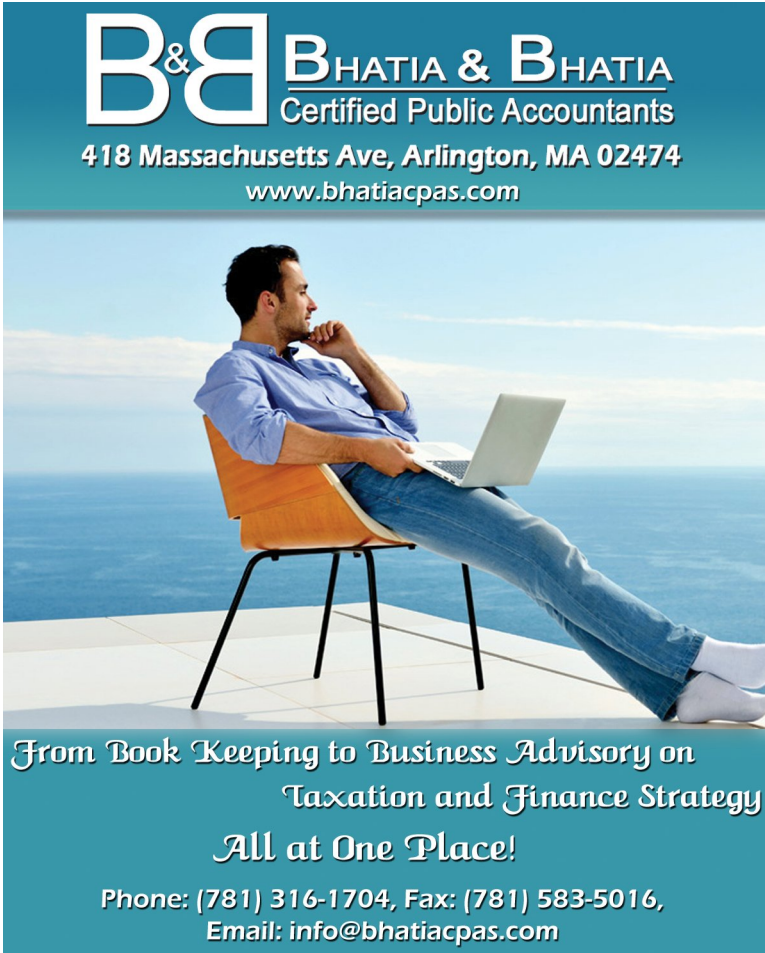
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We welcome new members at all times. Thank you!

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

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

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

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September 2021

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