



BULLETIN

lwva.com

February 2026

Calendar

Wednesday February 4	Date of MWRA vote on river plans; please sign a letter urging the elimination of sewage pollution in the Alewife Brook and elsewhere before this date. See page 3 for details.	
Wednesday February 4	5 p.m.	Last day for obtaining nomination papers for town offices from the Town Clerk's office.
Friday February 6	5 p.m.	Last day for filing nomination papers for town offices with the Town Clerk's Office.
Monday February 9	7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting via Zoom teleconference. The meeting URL will be sent to attendees; email one of the Co-Presidents if you would like to attend.
Sunday March 8		Last day for submitting questions for Candidates' Night by sending an email to envision@town.arlington.ma.us . See page 9 for details.
Wednesday March 18	8 p.m.	Save the date: Candidates' Night for the Town Election, Town Hall Auditorium, 730 Mass. Ave. Town Meeting candidates can meet voters from 7:30 to 8. We need volunteers; see page 9.
Saturday March 28	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Town Election.

Co-President's Message

As I sit down to write this message, I am looking out at a winter wonderland of snow with lots of footprints, both large and small, making trails throughout the yard. I wonder who is meeting whom as I lie sleeping.

Envision Arlington and the League of Women Voters of Arlington will be hosting Candidates Night at Town Hall on Wednesday, March 18, 2026. If you can volunteer to help set up, be a timer or a greeter, or help to clean up, please email me at carolynmparsons@msn.com. We also encourage you to send in questions for the candidates by March 8; see page 9 for information.

This year the Annual Town Election is Saturday, March 28. On the Town's website under Town Governance, you can click on Elections and Voting. Scrolling down the page, click on Townwide Races and then click on Nomination Papers Taken Out. The site provides a list of those who have taken out papers for town-wide offices and a list by precinct of those running for Town Meeting.

An operational override will be on the ballot for the local election. In a message from Julie Wayman, Deputy Town Manager – Finance, various measures have been taken throughout the budget preparation process to reduce the FY27 – 29 deficits. "Included in these efforts to reduce the deficit has been the decision to reduce the committee, commission, celebration, and events appropriations by 10% across the board. This reduction is in line with that made to Town expense budgets."

We are living in interesting times.

Carolyn Parsons

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2025–2026

Carolyn Parsons, Co-President	781-646-9309
Angela Olszewski, Co-President	781-648-8649
Meredith Zona, Organization VP	781-648-2753
Colleen Kirby, Action VP	339-222-3887
Joan Martin, Treasurer	617-966-4521
Marina Popova, Secretary	339-707-0740
Ann FitzGerald, Membership Director	781-646-9711
Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Voter Service	781-648-9026
Jo Anne Preston, Voter Service	781-643-5431
Laura Ahner, Candidates Night	360-907-2056
Kim Haase, Bulletin Editor/Ads	781-643-3429
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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.

Urgent: Please Sign a Letter Supporting Alewife Brook Sewage Elimination

By Carolyn Parsons

The local organization Save the Alewife Brook is urging people to sign a letter before **February 4**, when the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Board of Directors will vote on new plans for the Alewife, Mystic, and Charles rivers.

The LWVUS has long had a position in favor of the Clean Water Act. Would you please add your electronic signature to the letter to the MWRA Board shown below? It would be deeply appreciated. To sign it, go to

<https://savethealewifebrook.org/2026/01/25/make-your-voice-heard/>.

The letter is as follows:

Dear Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Board of Directors,

Please fulfill the mission of the MWRA to **protect community health** and welfare through **modernization of the sewer system**. Vote in favor of a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) plan that **eliminates CSO sewage pollution** at Alewife Brook.

During heavy rain events, **sewage-contaminated water floods over the banks of Alewife Brook**. It then flows into the homes, yards, and parks of the area's most diverse and vulnerable Environmental Justice neighborhoods. The area is densely populated, with 5000 people living in Alewife Brook's 100-year flood plain.

Alewife CSOs have made people sick. At Alewife Brook, E. coli counts are 10 times higher than EPA's recommended safe level for primary contact and 3 times higher for secondary contact. In addition to E. coli, Alewife area residents can be exposed to other live bacteria, viruses, and parasites, including norovirus and intestinal worms. A Boston University School of Public Health study concluded that just **living near CSOs can make people sick**.

In 2023, 29 million gallons of untreated sewage were discharged into Alewife Brook. That same year, the brook flooded five times. **Children rode bikes through sewage floodwater** after these storms. Joggers ran through it. And **parents pushed baby strollers through untreated sewage** flood water. The situation is horrifying and unacceptable.

MWRA can and must eliminate CSOs at Alewife Brook. Alewife Brook is what the Environmental Protection Agency refers to as a **"sensitive area."** This is because of its proximity to Cambridge's drinking water source at Fresh Pond. Alewife Brook is also considered an **"underserved and problem area"** because of frequent flooding and malfunctioning regulators. Alewife Brook CSOs are a major factor in water pollution and are responsible for a public health crisis. CSOs also increase health risks to Environmental Justice communities. This violates MWRA's mandate to protect public health, by providing an adequate sewage collection, treatment, and disposal system.

MWRA is in violation of its charter at Alewife Brook. Alewife CSOs are not in compliance with the Boston Harbor court case.

Please eliminate CSOs at Alewife Brook. Protect the health of folks who live near Alewife Brook. Protect the people who use the DCR state parkland around the brook. Protect future generations.

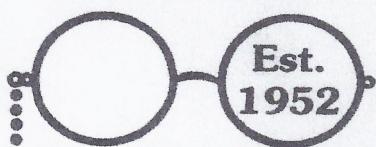
Sincerely, Save the Alewife Brook



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League of Women Voters Condemns Unwarranted Federal Presence and Military Escalation in Minnesota

ST. PAUL AND WASHINGTON, DC — The League of Women Voters of Minnesota and the League of Women Voters of the United States issued the following joint statement in response to the federal immigration enforcement and escalation of federal military activity in Minnesota:

"Minnesota is grieving and on edge. The growing presence and activities of federal immigration enforcement agents have terrorized, suppressed, and irreparably harmed our community. At a moment when Minnesotans deserve transparency, accountability, care, and calm leadership, the President has instead chosen to escalate fear by threatening to invoke the Insurrection Act and to place federal military forces on standby.

"The League opposes any illegal or unconstitutional use of the Insurrection Act, as positioning or threatening to deploy active-duty troops undermines public safety and reflects intimidation, suppression, and misuse of executive power.

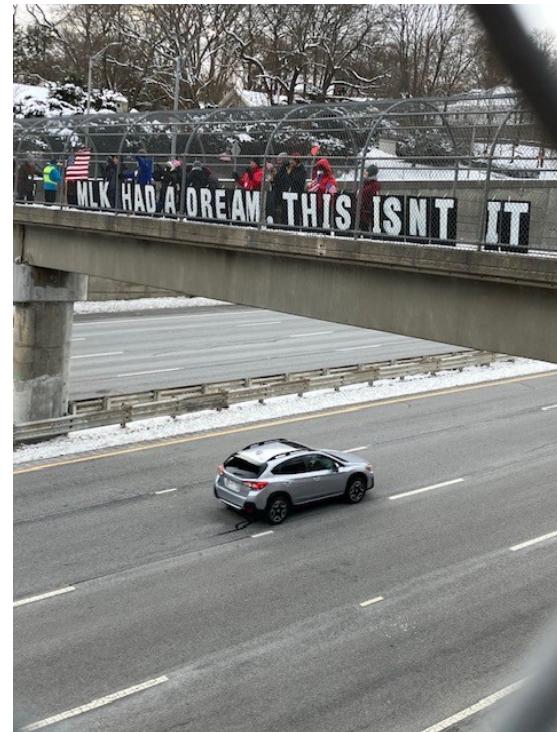
"Minnesotans have endured profound trauma in recent years and have repeatedly shown that lasting safety comes from people power: communities coming together to reject hatred, violence, and mistrust, and to demand justice through democratic means. Militarization undermines that work. It escalates tension, erodes trust, and puts residents at greater risk.

"The League of Women Voters calls on Congress to exercise its constitutional oversight authority and investigate these threats of federal overreach, as well as DHS, ICE, and CBP use-of-force. We urge the public to reject efforts to normalize the use of federal military force as a response to civil unrest or tragedy.

"The League stands with Minnesotans in affirming that democracy is built by the people, not imposed through fear or force. We strongly condemn any unwarranted federal immigration enforcement and military deployment or threat of deployment in Minnesota or anywhere in the United States."

The Arlington Visibility Brigade's sign on the Scituate Street bridge over Route 2, January 21, 2026.

Photo by Suzanne McLeod



MLK Event Inspires Town Hall Audience

By Kim Haase

The 38th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance, which the LWVA supports every year, took place in Town Hall on January 19, with a large audience. Outstanding Achievement awards were presented to former Arlington Public Schools Superintendent Kathleen Bodie and current APS Director of Human Resources Robert Spiegel. The featured speaker, former Wheelock College president Jackie Jenkins-Scott, spoke about Dr. King's idea of the "beloved community," focusing on love, service, interconnectedness, and justice. The Men's Chorus of the Peoples Baptist Church of Boston sang four spirituals and rejoined us at the end to lead us in "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and "We Shall Overcome."



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Protect Massachusetts Communities

From the State League

As we prepare for the third ICE surge here in the Commonwealth after Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians ends February 3, we see terrifying images in Maine and Minnesota: the murders of Renee Nicole Good on January 7 and Alex Petti on January 24. ICE is breaking down doors to illegally seize people from their homes in violation of the Fourth Amendment. Forty-six thousand Haitians call Massachusetts home, the third largest population in the US. More of our neighbors, friends and families will be forcibly removed throughout our cities and towns during the expected surge.

NOW is the time to raise our voices and urge Governor Healey to sign legislation guaranteeing two immigrant protections outlined in the Protect Massachusetts Communities Campaign:

Ensure our police do not assist ICE: Massachusetts law enforcement must never assist ICE in making civil immigration arrests by taking people into custody when no crime has been committed nor ask members of the public about their immigration status.

Don't turn police into ICE agents: ICE is pressuring and incentivizing local police departments to sign up for its 287(g) program, which turns street-level officers into ICE agents. They offer bounty-style bonuses for police forces that bring in high rates of targeted residents. Massachusetts must prevent this from happening within our borders.

Please call or email Governor Healey right away.

Feel free to personalize the message by adding why securing human rights for all residents is important to you.

Call Governor Healey's constituent services line at 617-725-4005 to leave a message.

Find the office of constituent services web email form at
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/email-the-governors-office>.

Advocacy 101 for Local Leagues

LWVA Action VP Colleen Kirby attended **Advocacy 101 for Local Leagues**, offered on Zoom January 27. She recommends it highly. You can find a link to the presentation and slides at <https://lwwma.org/advocacy-101-for-local-leagues-1-27-at-7pm-on-zoom/>.

The event featured Khadija Ali Amgaiab, Legislative and Policy Coordinator for the League of Women Voters of the US (LWVUS). It answered questions like these: How can your local League take action at the local, state, and national levels on issues that matter? How do you advocate on national issues? What are the guidelines for working on state bills? When can your League weigh in on town warrant articles or city council petitions? Do you need to conduct a study?

LWVMA Statement on 2026 Ballot Questions, January 22, 2026

Due to the high volume of member inquiries, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) Board of Directors offers the following statement on Ballot Questions for the November 3, 2026 election. While the Board has taken votes to provide a stance on each proposed measure, questions do not become official until July.

The LWVMA Board votes to support, oppose, or take no position on specific ballot questions based on positions or goals previously researched and adopted by the League, which are described in Impact on Issues (LWVUS, https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ImpactOnIssues_2024-FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf) and Where We Stand (LWVMA, <https://lwvma.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Where-We-Stand-2025-Refresh-R-12.4.pdf>). As a nonpartisan political organization, LWVMA does not endorse political parties or candidates, but does advocate for issues that the organization has studied and taken a position on after consensus from members.

LWVMA supports the following Ballot Questions for the November 3, 2026, election. This means that League members may participate in Yes campaigns for these Ballot Questions.

- Election Day Registration
- Law to Improve Access to Public Records
- Zoning of Single-Family Homes

LWVMA also supports a YES vote on the referendum to repeal firearms laws passed in the last legislative session. A YES vote keeps the legislation intact. See below for details.

LWVMA opposes the following Ballot Questions for the November 3, 2026, election. This means that members may participate in No campaigns for these questions.

- Limiting State Tax Collection Growth and Returning Surpluses to Taxpayers
- Reducing the State Personal Income Tax Rate from 5% to 4%

LWVMA takes no position on the following Ballot Questions for the November 3, 2026, election. This means that League members may participate in Yes or No campaigns for these Ballot Questions as individuals, but should not do anything to make the public think that LWVMA or a Local League has endorsed a Yes or No campaign.

- Implement All-Party State Primaries “Top 2”
- Act to reform and regulate legislative stipends
- Nature for All Fund
- Protect Tenants by Limiting Rent Increases
- Labor Relations Policies for Committee for Public Counsel Services Employees
- Recriminalize marijuana

For details on these positions, go to <https://lwvma.org/lwvma-statement-on-2026-ballot-questions/>.

Firearms Law Referendum

LWVMA is participating in the Vote Yes for a Safe Massachusetts campaign (<https://www.yesforasafema.com/>) to defeat the Massachusetts Firearm Regulations Referendum. This is a veto referendum to repeal An Act Modernizing Firearms Laws. LWVMA supported the passage of this law during the previous legislative session. A YES vote upholds the law as is. A NO vote repeals the law. Learn more and take action via the Yes campaign website.

Next Steps

The legislature may choose to act on the petitions by May 5. If they take no action, another 12,429 additional signatures are required by June 17. LWVMA will host educational forums when the question numbers are finalized by the Secretary of the Commonwealth in July. Contact the state league regarding educational forums.

Come Help with Candidates' Night!

Mark your calendars: Arlington Candidates' Night is **Wednesday, March 18** at 8 p.m., in person in Town Hall. The event will also be broadcast live on ACMi and shown on cable several times before the election. As always, the LWVA and Envision Arlington co-sponsor the event.



There will be question-and-answer sessions with the candidates for town-wide offices: Select Board, School Committee, Board of Assessors, and Housing Authority. There will also be informal sessions with candidates for Town Meeting before the event, from 7:30 to 8. But it can't happen without you!

As we did last year, we are asking people to submit questions for the candidates in advance, to be selected by volunteers from the LWVA and Envision Arlington. Please submit questions by sending an email to envision@town.arlington.ma.us by **Sunday, March 8**. Questions should apply to all candidates in a race; please specify in your email which questions are intended for which race.

We need volunteers for the following positions:

- **Timers:** We need at least four volunteers to keep time during the question-and-answer session, and to hold up time cards to keep all candidates within time limits so everyone gets a fair chance to speak.
- **Greeters:** We need at least two volunteers to greet people arriving at Candidates' Night and provide information about the League.
- **Set-up/Take-down:** Help us to put up precinct signs and get other items organized for the event or take down and pack up when the event is over.

Thank you for your help! To sign up, send an email to Co-President Carolyn Parsons: carolynmparsons@msn.com.

Membership Dues Information

By Ann FitzGerald

LWVA members no longer receive written reminders of dues renewals on April 1. The League of Women Voters of the US (<https://www.lwv.org/>) should now send out a reminder to you. Dues are divided between the national, state, and local leagues.

You should have received a notice to register at the LWVUS portal. If you didn't receive it, you can go to the portal and register yourself. Go to <https://www.lwv.org/> and click Member Log In. Your name was sent to LWVUS for renewal purposes and is listed on the membership roster. The site is secure and has a verification process.

The LWVUS portal requests dues of \$75, but you can contribute any amount over \$20.

If you prefer to renew by check, you will be a member of the LWVA only, not the state or national League. Make out a check for \$60 to "League of Women Voters of Arlington" and send it to me:

Ann FitzGerald
162 Summer St Apt 1
Arlington, MA 02476

Call me at 781-646-9711 or email annfitz@rcn.com if you have questions.

February 2026

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